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SHEIK YOOSUF IL HAAZIN,

PATRIARCH OF THE NESTORIANS.

Saunders & Otley, 1852.

Mount Lebanon

A TEN YEARS' RESIDENCE

FROM 1842 TO 1852

DESCRIBING THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGION
OF ITS INHABITANTS

WITH

A FULL & CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THE DRUSE RELIGION

AND CONTAINING

Historical Records of the Mountain Tribes

FROM

PERSONAL INTERCOURSE WITH THEIR CHIEFS AND OTHER AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

BY

COLONEL CHURCHILL

STAFF OFFICER ON THE BRITISH EXPEDITION TO SYRIA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MOUNT LEBANON.

CHAPTER I.

THE battle of Mejdelmoosh placed the government of the Lebanon in the hands of the Emir Alamadeen and the Emir Asaff Safa, who proceeded to render themselves acceptable in the eyes of the Pasha, by doubling the miri, and exercising the severest exactions to enforce its payment. The Emir Milheim Maan retired unmolested to the Shoof, and for the moment escaped the researches of the Turkish authorities. The property of the Maans, however, became the especial object of spoliation; and while the Yemeni faction in the Druse mountains, acting in the name and sanctioned by the authority of the Turkish Govern-

ment, satiated their rancorous hostility against their rivals by deeds of plunder and devastation, the Safas, on their part, put into execution their long-harboured desire for revenge on the Maronite Sheiks of the House of Haazin, who had ever been the firm and constant supporters of the Emir Fakaradeen, by similar measures of destruction. Heading in person some chosen bands, the Emir Ali Alamadeen ravaged the Metten, the Ghurb, and the Joord, and not a village or house that was suspected of partiality to the Keisey, was left without marks of his brutal retaliation.

The Turks, applauding a line of conduct, which, though it promised to leave the finest parts of the Lebanon bare and desolate, promoted their own views of weakening and enfeebling it, rewarded the Emir Ali for his activity by giving him the government of Djebail, Batroon, and Kesrouan; hoping, by means of such an unscrupulous partizan, to render these provinces in their turn so weak and impoverished, as to be unable to oppose any barrier to the exercise of the direct dominion, which they contemplated erecting over the haughty and warlike mountaineers of the Lebanon. The spirit of

the Keisey faction seems to have been considerably broken by such a series of misfortunes and reverses, and no attempt was made for many years to redeem their fallen fortunes.

At length, in the year 1651, the Emir Milheim Maan, in conjunction with the Shehaab Emirs of Wady Tame, resolved to make a strenuous effort to shake off the domineering insolence of the Yemeni. No sooner was the assembling of their forces generally made known, than the Emir Ali Alamadeen, leaving Beyrout, which had been the place of his residence and the seat of his jurisdiction, proceeded to Damascus, and craved the assistance of the Turkish troops; offering at the same time a large sum of money, for the possession of the Shoof. His demands were readily acceded to, and a considerable force placed at his disposal. But scarcely had he re-entered the Wady Urn—a difficult defile between Damascus and the Bekaa—than he found himself vigorously attacked by the Shehaabs, who had rapidly advanced from Hasbeya on the news of his advance, to intercept his return. This unexpected onset proved completely successful, and the Turkish troops were driven back

in confusion, while the Emir Ali, severely wounded, effected a hasty retreat to Damascus.

On making his appearance before the Pasha, the latter loudly upbraided him for his cowardice, and at the same time, accusing him of treachery and treason, had him thrown into prison; thus the zealous promoter of Turkish designs on the Lebanon became, in his turn, the victim of their vacillating and perfidious policy: for the Pasha, treating misfortune and want of success as a crime, transferred his favour and countenance to the Shehaabs and the Maans, and, sending them Pelisses of honour, confirmed them in the government of their respective districts.

The Emir Milheim enjoyed comparative peace for the remaining few years of his life, which terminated in the family palace at Sidon, July 16th, 1659. The Lebanon obtained a slight respite from its distractions, but its wounds were never destined to be entirely healed; for every new Pasha who came from Constantinople, systematically opened fresh causes of quarrel and contention among its chiefs, as though a malicious and avenging demon had it in commission from on

High, to stamp this fair land with an abiding curse!

The Emir Ali Alamadeen died of the plague at Damascus, in the year 1661; and the same year, Achmet Pasha, lately appointed Governor of Syria, signalized the commencement of his administration by a night march on Hasbeya and Rascheya, in the hope of seizing the Shehaab Emirs. They fortunately escaped, but their palaces were burned and razed to the ground, and all the trees of every description on their valuable and extensive demesnes, either rooted up or cut down. Terror-struck by this act of baseness and perfidy, the Keisey fled the country; the Maans going to the Houran, and the Shehaabs to Djebail-il-Aala, near Aleppo.

Availing themselves of this extraordinary contingency, which left the Lebanon deprived of its long-accustomed chiefs, some of the Druse Sheiks, who had hitherto played but a very secondary and inconsiderable part in the general affairs of the Mountain, presented themselves before Achmet Pasha and volunteered their services. He demanded from them money and provisions for the army, and, upon their taking on themselves the

responsibility of satisfying his utmost possible wants in those respects, the rule of the Shoof was conferred on Sheik Serhal Amad. At the same time, one of the sons of the Emir Ali Alamadeen was appointed to the post which had been occupied by his father.

The most notable of the Lebanon Emirs being thus driven into exile, the Porte thought the occasion opportune for extending its immediate authority over the Mountain; and in the year 1668, Mohammed Pasha was sent to establish a seat of government at Sidon, which, ever since the Crusades, had been the favourite residence of the Maans, who, it will be remembered, had wrested it from the Franks by their prowess and valour; and his jurisdiction, embracing the whole mountain range parallel with Beyrout, Sidon, Tyre, and Acre, and including these seaports, received the appellation which it still retains, of *Ealet Saida.*

One of the first acts of this Turkish officer, no doubt prompted by higher authority, was one of baseness and treachery. By repeated promises of forgiveness and protection, he lured the two sons

of the Emir Milheim Maan, the Emirs Turcomas and Achmet, out of their retreat, and appointed the plains of the river Kasmeea, near Sidon, as a place of rendezvous. Going out in person to meet them, he disarmed all their suspicions, by the courtesy and affability of his discourse, promised them a speedy restoration of their properties, and, placing the Pelisse of honour on their shoulders with his own hand, cautioned them to merit by their loyalty and obedience, the Sultan's returning favour.

On the following morning, as they were preparing to take their departure, they were suddenly attacked by the Pasha's guards, who fell upon them with a vigour and ruthlessness which too clearly indicated their deadly intentions. The Emir Turcomas was killed on the spot, but his brother, the Emir Achmet, partly owing to the confusion of the moment, but chiefly to his extraordinary strength and dexterity, managed to cut his way through the miscreants, and, mounted on a thorough-bred Arab mare, soon found himself once more on the borders of the desert. The unpopularity of the Yemeni Emirs, who owed their

elevation entirely to the selfish and tortuous policy of the Turks, who thought by their means more effectually to accomplish and keep up their projects of disunion, and consequent weakness, amongst the Mountain chiefs, began, nevertheless, to become more and more apparent; and when the Emir Achmet Maan, after a lapse of two years, and following the example of his father, once more presented himself in the Shoof, he found the popular voice ready to declare in his favour. The removal of Mohammed Pasha tended likewise to favour the consummation of his wishes.

In the spring of 1670, he fearlessly commenced offensive operations against his rival; and descending with some thousand followers into the plain of Beyrout, advanced on that town, with the intention of wresting it from the hands of the Emir Mousa Alamadeen, who held it on the part of the Turkish Government. The latter having led out the few troops he had at his command, and summoned by war signals such of the mountaineers as were disposed to join his standard, the two parties joined in conflict in the olive wood which is adjacent to the Burj-il-Barajany. The

impetuosity of the Emir Achmet's attack, however, overthrew all obstacles, and the Yemeni, after a slight resistance, were driven back in confusion to the sea-coast, and finally dispersed amongst the precipices of the Dog River.

Entering Beyrout in triumph, the Emir Achmet immediately despatched messengers to Djbel-il-Aala, and informing the Shehaabs of his success, invited them to return and take possession of their family appanages of Hasbeya and Rascheya. The rejoicings which now took place in the Druse mountains, clearly evinced the sense which was generally entertained of Turkish tyranny and intrigue. The exactions which had been imposed on the peasants by the Yemeni, for the purpose of satiating the boundless rapacity of their masters, had utterly impoverished, and in some instances depopulated, some of the finest districts in the Lebanon.

So appalling was the ruin which they had been made instrumental in effecting, that when at a later period, the Emir Achmet Maan was offered the government of Djebail, he positively refused it, as a charge which would entail on him the

necessity of taxing a people, who were already reduced to the last stages of poverty and misery. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the Keisey Emirs were hailed as deliverers by the mountaineers, and that their return to the Shoof was accompanied by the most heartfelt acclamations. The occasion was deemed propitious to the celebration of nuptial festivities, and the Emir Achmet Maan gave his only daughter in marriage to the Emir Mousa Shehaab.

It is remarkable, that for the space of twenty years, the Turks seem to have abstained from any direct intervention in the affairs of the Mountain. Like the picadore, who plunges his dart into the bull's neck, and then leaves it to writhe and plunge in its intolerable anguish, so does the Turkish government at times shake its standards on the Lebanon, and after having directed its efforts to envenom and inflame the wounds of party-hate and faction, withdraws for a time, leaving it a prey to the self-consuming and exhausting torments of intestine bloodshed and commotion. Though repeatedly a victim to this atrocious policy, fortunately the present interval proved to it one

of comparative repose. For the Emir Achmet Maan, inheriting in many respects the qualities of his distinguished ancestor, conciliated rival antipathies by the candour and generosity of his proceedings; while the Yemeni faction, no longer encouraged and countenanced by the Turkish Pasha, fell into that natural disrepute and insignificance which attends the disruption of a fictitious position.

His almost self-assumed authority was cheerfully acknowledged throughout the whole extent of the Mountain; and, though he could not entirely check the oppressive impositions of the Mohammedan chiefs, who ruled in its more northern portions; yet the districts which were under his more immediate control and superintendence, were ever open to all who sought there an asylum from wrongs and vexations, which they were unable either to support or to resist. Not only some Maronites, but several Metuali families availed themselves of this advantage to remove into the Ghurb, the Joord, and the Shoof, from the upper districts of Djebail and Batroon, to escape the tyranny of the Metuali Sheiks of the House of Hamadi. When, however,

these chiefs extended their excursions into the plains, and even menaced the Kesrouan with their lawless depredations, the Emir Achmet deemed it necessary to take measures for repressing their overbearing audacity, and marching a considerable force upon the high grounds of Meneytri, attacked them in the midst of their strongest holds.

Whatever might have been the ultimate result of his measures in this respect, his praiseworthy resolutions were suddenly checked, in the year 1693, by an imperial Firman, which was communicated to him by the Pasha of Sidon, appointing the Emir Mousa Alamadeen Governor of the Lebanon. To give effect to and support this sudden and unexpected change, the various Pashas of Damascus, Sidon, and Tripoli sent their contingents of troops, and a body of nearly 20,000 men was speedily concentrated in the Bekaa.

The Emir Achmet, in order to avoid the desolating consequences of a civil war, which he felt the Turks were anxious to entail upon the Lebanon, hesitated not to vacate his post and withdraw himself altogether from the scene, and secreted himself at Hasbeya, amongst his relations of the House of

Shehaab. The Druse Sheiks of the Keisey party no longer delayed, in the absence of their chief, giving in their adhesion to the Government; and the Nekads, Eids, and Amads, even the Haazims from the Kesrouan, went to the Bekaa to salute the Mushir. This general submission averted the advance of the Turkish army; and the Pashas, congratulating themselves on their well-timed and successful demonstration, drew off their respective forçes. The real sentiments of the Druse Sheiks, who now found themselves placed in a situation to act an important and influential part in the affairs of the Mountain, failed not soon to discover themselves; and the Emir Mousa Alamadeen, though nominally installed at Deir-el-Kammar, soon experienced, that an authority destitute of the sincere support of the chiefs by whom he was surrounded, was vain and illusory. Secret communications were opened between the latter and the Emir Achmet Maan. Emissaries, principally consisting of experienced Druse Ockals, whose admirable tact and prudence so peculiarly fit them to be conspirators, gradually arranged and matured the mazes of a wide-spread confederacy, until at length the

disaffection became so general and apparent, that the Emir Mousa, anxious to escape from a thraldom both painful and degrading, fled in disguise to Sidon, and poured out his griefs to Mustapha Pasha.

No sooner was his flight discovered, than the Keisey, assembling the principal leaders of their party, took the novel course of petitioning that Turkish functionary to intercede with the Sultan for the restoration of the Emir Achmet Maan. The latter, on his part, seconded these proposals with costly presents, and promises of an increased revenue to the government. The Pasha, satisfied with these acts of deference, and feeling probably the risk and inutility of attempting to thwart so decided a manifestation of public opinion, wrote to Constantinople, representing the aspect of affairs, and in a few months an Imperial mandate arrived, formally investing the Emir Achmet Maan with the title and functions of Governor of the Lebanon.

The Emir survived these events about five years; and as he died without leaving any sons, and was himself moreover the only surviving male member

of the House of Maan, the Mountain chiefs took the earliest opportunity after his decease, to select a noble whom they might present to the Pasha of Sidon, as a worthy candidate for the dignity which had become vacant.

CHAPTER II.

THE Christian and Druse Emirs now convened a general meeting, on the plains of Sumkaneea, between Deir-el-Kammar and Muctara, in the year 1698, when it was decided to call upon the Emir Bechir, son of the Emir Hossein Shehaab of Rascheya, to assume the government of the Mountain. Although Druses, the claims of the House of Alamadeen were almost unanimously put aside; and it is a fact which deserves to be remembered, that it is to the influence of the Druse Chiefs that the family of Shehaab principally owed their introduction to the Lebanon, and their elevation to the rank and power which they enjoyed there for nearly a century and a half.

The choice was so far approved of by Sultan Mustapha, that he confirmed the Emir Bechir in

the post to which the general voice had raised him, not however as Governor, but as Regent for the Emir Heider, a boy of twelve years of age. This singular exception seems almost to warrant the supposition, that the principle of hereditary descent was intended to be admitted by the Porte, in its disposal of so responsible an office. For the Emir Heider was the son of the daughter of the Emir Achmet Maan, the last of his race, by her marriage with the Emir Mousa Shehaab. The admission likewise of the right of the feudal chiefs to choose their ruler, would seem at first view to infer a liberal and considerate policy. But the principles of popular election involved in itself seeds of anarchy and confusion, too valuable to be lost sight of by the Turkish Government; and it will be seen henceforward, that the Pashas appointed to regulate the general affairs of the Mountain, dexterously availed themselves of the conflicting interests which spring out of such a system, to carry on their own designs for creating disunion and indulging their personal rapacity.

The year 1700 was signalized by a rebellion on the part of the Metualis inhabiting the mountains

above Sidon and Tyre, a district, strictly speaking, not included within the range of the Lebanon, but more or less connected with its destinies, as coming under the jurisdiction of the Pasha of Ealet Saida. The Emir Bechir, called upon by Raslan Pasha to march against the insurgents, who were headed by Sheik Mishrif Xreer, assembled a force of 8000 mountaineers, and penetrating into Belad Bshaara, succeeded in quelling the spirit of disaffection. The general popularity of the Emir Bechir was such as might have induced him, as the period approached for the resignation of his office, to aim at endeavouring to keep the power in his own hands; and it is not improbable that means might have been found to satisfy his ambition in this respect. His own immediate relations, however, and more particularly those interested in the advancement of the young prince, determined, by one of those unscrupulous measures so common in the East, to thwart effectually such untimely pretensions.

Under the fairest appearances of friendship, the Emir Bechir was invited by them to Hasbeya. His young nephew was instructed to pay him every possible mark of courtesy and respect, and festi-

vities were prolonged, with all the usual accompaniments of horsemanship, singing, and rejoicing, in a manner to charm and gratify their unsuspicious visitor. At last, in one of those moments of temporary oblivion, produced by the constant round of the jovial cup, and when, according to Eastern usages, sweetened confectionary is introduced to give a zest and variety to the palling senses, a plate was placed near the Emir containing white and red-coloured sugar-plums. Two of the Emirs engaged to accomplish the fatal plot, sitting near and sharing the contents of the dish, occasionally, with the usual marks of hilarity and mirth, signified their sense of respect and affection, by picking out the red sugar-plums (which had been poisoned) and pressing them on their guest's attention, who cheerfully accepted and swallowed the proffered selection.

The sudden arrival of some messengers from Safet, demanding the Emir's immediate presence, prematurely broke up the festal meeting; and, at dawn of day, amidst the warmest expressions of devotion and attachment, the Emir bade farewell to his relations, and took his departure from his

ancestral abode. On crossing the Jordan, a slight faintness seized him, which he attributed to the indulgence of the preceding days. As he passed the waters of the Lake of Houlé, his silver tankard could hardly supply fast enough the cravings of his raging thirst. The Lake of Tiberias burst upon his burning eye-balls like a sea of molten lead; and, as he turned to ascend the rugged pass which leads to Safet, the deadly poison curdling in his veins, too truly warned him of his wretched fate.

He died in that fortress, after an illness of three days; and, in the year 1706, the Emir Heider, at the age of eighteen, assumed the functions of Ruler of the Lebanon, which had already been provisionally secured to him. The Emir Bechir had been called to the mountains of Safet to suppress some new machinations on the part of Sheik Mushrif Xreer; and the Emir Heider, anxious to display his courage and zeal, followed up the measures of his predecessor. Formally declaring that Metuali Chief to have forfeited his post and functions, he appointed in his place the Druse Sheik Abou Harmoosh; and, giving him a sufficient force, sent him to govern Belad Bshaara and its adjacent districts.

This choice was pregnant with the most important consequences, and led to a state of affairs as remarkable as they were unprecedented and unforeseen. Not many months elapsed, before the Emir was obliged to call his nominee to account, for his unblushing rapacity and the tyrannical nature of his exactions, which had become the subject of loud and general complaint. To escape a personal summons, which he knew he could not resist, and which he felt must terminate in his disgrace and removal, he took the determination of presenting himself in person before the Pasha at Sidon, and, by bribes and entreaties, to secure his favour and protection.

Events proved that his confidence was not misplaced. That Turkish authority, offended at the apparent independence of the Emir Heider, who had forgotten or neglected to make him the customary official visit, and to propitiate him by the usual presents, readily seized the occasion which now offered, to surround the young Prince with snares and difficulties, and make him feel the precariousness of his elevation. The Yemeni, those ever-ready tools of faction, were easily induced to

listen to his overtures; the Druse House of Raslan promised their assistance, and, as it was known to be repugnant to the general feelings of the Mountain Chiefs, of whatever party, to be placed under the authority of a Sheik, a higher title was procured from the Porte for the Pasha's favourite; and when everything was matured, the Druse Sheik Abou Harmoosh, under the title of Mahmoud Pasha, proceeded to Deir-el-Kammar, to assume the government of the Lebanon.

This movement was unexpected, though it was sudden and vigorously supported; and the Emir Heider, avoiding a collision, retreated at once to Ghazir, whither he was incontinently followed by all the principal Druse Sheiks of the families of Cadi, Nekad, Abd-el-Melik, and Talhook. His appearance in the Maronite districts seemed to excite a general feeling of enthusiasm; yet, as time had not been afforded for giving him any organized plan of support, and as he was unwilling to compromise any one by his presence amongst his adherents, at a time when Turkish emissaries might probably be abroad, he withdrew to the cave of Israel in Djebel Hermul above Akoora, and for

nearly a year awaited in that retreat the course of events.

In the meanwhile, Mahmoud Pasha enjoyed the fruits of his temporary success. Giving way to his natural propensities, he demanded, on the one hand, excessive contributions from the people, while on the other, he endeavoured to gain the hearts of the few chiefs by whom he was surrounded, and particularly the Emirs of the House of Alamadeen, by a princely extravagance, and the allurements of places of emolument and trust. The unnatural position in which the latter found themselves situated, as ministering to the caprice, and seeking the patronage of a Sheik of their own religion, was of itself sufficiently degrading, and by none other than these shameless panderers to their own reckless feelings of cupidity and ambition, would have been submitted to.

But when they so far forgot all sense of propriety, as to lend themselves to a breach of one of the strictest and most uncompromising usages of the country, by giving away a daughter of their noble family to this creature of Turkish intrigue, thus soiling the blood of the Tnoohs by an alliance

with a needy and unknown adventurer, an impression was produced among the aristocracy of the Lebanon, which, more than any other circumstance, tended to unite them in one common effort against a posture of affairs, which they felt to be unnatural and humiliating.

Called upon by a special deputation to place himself at the head of the contemplated movement, the Emir Heider Shehaab came forth from his lurking-place, and, going to Soleema, the residence of the Mukuddim Hossein Bilemma, found that Druse chief actively engaged in arranging and promoting measures of hostility. The heads of the Keisey had made this spot the place of their rendezvous. The Haazins, Habashes, and Amads from Barook and Kafernebra, had brought their contingents, and, with the followers of the Druse Sheiks above mentioned,* who had followed the Emir Heider on his retreat from Deir-el-Kammar, contributed to the formation of a Mountain force, formidable both in numbers and in the unanimity of sentiment which pervaded it.

Made aware of these threatening preparations,

* See page 22.

Mahmoud Pasha lost no time in calling upon the Turkish authorities to give him that assistance, which the impending crisis so loudly demanded. Nor, indeed, was such a support less strenuously given than it was earnestly sought for. The Pashas of Sidon and Damascus made simultaneous movements on the Lebanon with all their disposable forces, the former moving through the fir-wood near Beyrout, and ascending to Bate-Mirri, the latter taking undisputed possession of the Damascus road, and occupying the advantageous and commanding post of Mugheety. Mahmoud Pasha, accompanied by the whole of the Yemeni, and heading such mountaineers as they had rallied round them, marched to Aindara, a village situated in a narrow gorge, in the Upper Arkoob, and adjacent to the Bekaa.

The position of the Keisey was rendered anything but encouraging, from these well-timed manœuvres on the part of their enemies, who thus holding the most important heights in the vicinity, could readily watch and control the movements of the Druse forces, collected as they were in one of the deepest valleys of the Metten. A vigorous and

characteristic expedient, however, relieved them from this apparent disadvantage; and, resolving to stake everything on one desperate blow, it was unanimously determined that, leaving the Turkish columns unnoticed, a concentrated effort should be made on Aindara by a night attack.

The Mukuddim Hossein Bilemma, who was the soul of this daring expedition, led on the main party, until reaching the heights near Mugheety, he marched almost within gun-shot of the Pasha of Damascus, whose soldiers, never dreaming of such night visitors, were securely enjoying their slumbers. This important point once passed, a second and a third party moved in such directions as to close the outlets which led either to the Bekaa, or to the Arkoob, and about an hour before daybreak, a simultaneous onset was made on the unconscious occupants of the devoted village. Scarcely had the Yemeni time to fly to arms before the foe was upon them.

Leading on the charge with furious impetuosity, the Druse Sheiks spread terror and dismay by their feats of personal valour and prowess. The Mukuddim Hossein, with his own hand, slew three

of the Emirs Alamadeen. No quarter whatever was given, and the prisoners, as fast as they were surrounded and taken, were led to the brink of a water-course which divides the habitations of Aindara, and mercilessly put to the sword. So complete was the destruction effected, so appalling the effusion of blood, at the spot above alluded to, that to this very day the peasant points to it traditionally, as the "Bloody Water-course!"

By a singular fatality, every one of the Emirs of the House of Alamadeen were present in this deadly affray. Four of them, together with Mahmoud Pasha himself, fell alive into the hands of the victors, and were taken by them to the plains of Barook, whither the Emir Heider proceeded, accompanied by all his feudal colleagues, the very evening of the battle. The surreptitious Pasha, reduced now to the very small dimensions of an ordinary Sheik, had his tongue and thumbs cut off.

A momentary sensation of sympathy was evinced as the Druse Emirs were led out to meet their fate; and, despite the gravity of their many offences against the commonweal, notwithstanding the unscrupulous support afforded for so many years by

the leading members of their family, to the heartless policy of a government which lived by the dissensions it created, and their unblushing subservience to its selfish wishes and suggestions; it could not be forgotten, that they were the last representatives of that illustrious House, which was once the pride and boast of the Lebanon, and that with them the lineage of the Tnoohs was about to perish for ever. The stern demands of necessity, and even perhaps, of safety, made their deaths, however, indispensable; and the occasion now afforded finally to extirpate the rancorous faction of the Yemeni, was too valuable to be lost.

CHAPTER III.

THE battle of Aindara, which took place in the year 1713, forms an important epoch in the history of the Lebanon. The Druse Sheiks, as has been remarked in the preceding pages, took the opportunity which now so favourably presented itself, of advancing their pretensions to a higher degree of consideration than they had hitherto enjoyed, and claimed from the Emir Heider Shehaab, who undoubtedly owed the tenure of his post to their exertions, a clear and unequivocal recognition of their feudal and political rights, as a reward for their bravery and services. The Emir, on his part, was in no way in a position to reject, or even to modify, such measures as his imperious supporters might choose to impose upon him.

The entire range of the Lebanon was now there-

fore divided into districts, territorial and fiscal, which under the name of "Macaatas," were separately placed under the jurisdiction of a feudal House. The Chief of each district became intrusted with the collection of the government revenue within its limits, and made himself responsible for the payment of a fixed sum of money yearly, into the Emir's treasury. The document specifying the amount, after having been sealed by both parties, was delivered over to each Sheik, as a "Macaata," or Contract, the terms of which he was bound under all circumstances to fulfil. Certain pecuniary perquisites, which it was left to each "Macaatagee," or "Possessor of the Contract," to levy on the people, in what way he chose, were attached to his office; while full and unrestrained power of punishing crimes and offences, by blows, imprisonment or fine, was placed unreservedly in his hands.

To give the Druse Sheiks a greater degree of importance, and to gratify a principle of pride and vanity of which the Mountaineers are singularly and even ridiculously tenacious, the Emir Heider, whether willingly, or by compulsion, so far im-

proved upon his former style of epistolary address towards them, as to use the expression, " Cherished Brother" to every male member of their families. But the Mukuddim Hossein Bilemma, who projected and so gallantly led on the surprise of Aindara, boldly and audaciously extorted a higher testimony to his valour; and, when a messenger of the Emir, shortly after the battle, brought compliments and inquiries after the Mukuddim, this haughty Chief cut him down with his sabre, fiercely exclaiming, " Am I, who slew three Emirs, still to be called ' Mukuddim ?' "

Not many hours elapsed before a second messenger arrived, bearing a letter from the Governor of the Lebanon, addressed to his " Cherished and beloved Brother, the Emir Hossein Bilemma;" and from that day, the House of Bilemma has preserved hereditarily the Emirial dignity. Not satisfied with conferring so distinguished a mark of the sense he entertained of his merits, on the victorious Mukuddim, the Emir Heider, feeling the importance of securing the attachment and support of his influential family, having thus preliminarily raised it to a rank correspondent with his own, found that

without contravening the severe restrictions of etiquette, he might draw still more closely the ties of mutual amity and friendship, and while he himself espoused the daughter of the new Emir, the latter was at the same time united to the Emir Heider's sister. Independent of his Macaata, which, divided amongst the various branches of the House of Bilemma, viz., Kaidbey, Mraad, and Faris, comprised the wide and extensive ranges of the Metten, the village of Bate-Shehaab was given him as a family appanage.

The return of the triumphant Keisey to Deir-el-Kammar, where the Emir Heider was installed with every possible demonstration of exultation and rejoicing, paved the way for a few years of peace and repose. The unanimity which animated the Chiefs in the Lebanon, for awhile disarmed the treacherous advances and machinations of the Turkish authorities, who remained passive spectators of a consummation, which gave the former an attitude of feudal independency, at once novel and imposing. The proceedings of the Emir Heider were such as to procure him the respect and confidence of all parties.

Humane, generous, and hospitable, and relieved in a great degree from the extensive and complicated duties of public affairs, by his recent political arrangements, he gained the hearts of the Druse Sheiks by his honest acknowledgment of their newly-acquired prerogatives, and by the undeviating tenour of a cordiality and frankness, which admitted them, at all times, to his intimacy and regard.

Passionately addicted to falconry, it was his delight to assemble the principal of his feudal colleagues, and taking them along with him on distant excursions, spend weeks, and even months, in the exercise and enjoyment of this noble and exhilarating pastime. His death, which occurred in the year 1729, was universally lamented; and it is related, that for the space of forty days, the mourning for him was constant, both night and day. The Metuali Chief, Mishrif Xreer, however, took the occasion to display his animosity, and manifested his joy at being freed from an enemy who had more than any other served to humiliate and abase him, by dyeing the manes and tails of his horses with henna, and caparisoning them as if for a fête.

The Emir Milheim, the son and successor of the Emir Heider, on hearing of this insulting proceeding, immediately applied to the Pasha of Sidon for the government of Bellad Bshaara; which was no sooner committed to his charge, than he advanced into the country of the Metualis, and after having ravaged most of their villages, returned to Deir-el-Kammar with considerable booty.

The commencement of the rule of the Emir Milheim was marked by a step on the part of himself, and the mountain Sheiks, that was the prelude to difficulties and disputes between them and the Turkish government, which have continued with more or less interruption, up to the present day. Emboldened by their virtual independence, and straitened probably in their means by the increasing demands of the Pasha of Sidon, who now commenced the system so zealously persevered in by his successors, of never conferring a place, or a Pelisse of honour, or even a favour, without exacting an enormous bribe, they took forcible possession of the whole plain of the Bekaa, and distributed its farms amongst themselves, at their good-will and pleasure.

As this unceremonious proceeding particularly involved the rights, and directly attacked the authority of the Pashalick of Damascus, Soliman Pasha-il-Aadm marched with a large force for the defence of that district. The Emir Milheim, however, contrived for the time to appease him by a present of 50,000 piastres, and for this sum of money the Pasha consented to withdraw his troops and suspend his interference. This state of things continued for nearly twelve years, during which period the Bekaa was drained, ploughed, and sown by the Druses, upon the payment of a merely nominal miri to the treasury of Damascus, as if it were their own independent property.

It is natural to suppose that a cession of this nature, which was literally imposed upon the Pasha at the time being by his temporary inability to resist such an encroachment, would not be accepted by the Turkish Government, as a definite arrangement; in the year 1741, therefore, on the secret complaints of some of the villagers of the Bekaa against the Emir Milheim, who had quartered upon them an unusual body of mountaineers during the harvest, Soliman Pasha again sent

troops to assert the Sultan's authority. The consequence, on this occasion, was a severe engagement between the two parties, terminating in favour of the Emir Milheim, who absolutely pursued his antagonists to within an hour's distance of the gates of Damascus, and, on his return to the Bekaa, gave the delinquent villages up to indiscriminate plunder.

The union which prevailed amongst the Mountain Chiefs at this period, paralyzed for a time the arm of the Turkish authorities; and, indeed, the assistance of the Emir Milheim was more than once demanded by Sadadeen Pasha-il-Aadm, the Pasha of Sidon, to enable him to subdue the refractory conduct of the Metualis, who repeatedly refused to pay the exorbitant tribute which was enforced upon them. On one occasion, when the Emir had, in conformance with the Pasha's commands, assembled a considerable force to march against them, the Metuali leaders contrived to appease the latter by some well-timed presents; but the Emir refused to retrace his steps, and, proceeding into their country, met and attacked them near the plains of Merjyoom, and after having

slain nearly sixteen hundred of the Metualis, and burned several of their villages, took four of their Sheiks back with him prisoners to Deir-el-Kammar, refusing to release them until they bound themselves to pay a yearly sum of 6000 piastres, besides two thorough-bred Arab mares at each payment. The Pasha, so far from resenting the proceeding, expressed himself satisfied with the Emir's conduct, and paid him the expenses of his expedition.

Where the appointment of a Governor of the Lebanon depended on the caprice of a superior local authority, it was naturally to be expected that there would not be wanting rival claimants to excite and promote a change, in accordance with their views and inclinations. The difficulty of satisfying and pleasing all the leading chiefs of a petty feudal aristocracy, which had but lately found themselves invested with political importance, soon began to be apparent; and almost as a natural consequence of the distribution of power which ensued upon the battle of Aindara, the spirit of party, which for a time seemed to have been extinguished, found occasion by degrees to

exercise once more its baneful influence, and, in the course of events, to establish a bloody line of demarcation between factions mutually animated by feelings of rivalry and hatred.

A trivial incident during the earlier administration of the Emir Heider, had laid the foundation of the fortunes of the Druse House of Jumblatt, and prepared the way for its assuming a lead and importance, which enabled it eventually to rally around it a vast and influential body of partizans and adherents. Sheik Kubalan-il-Cadi, a considerable Druse proprietor in the Shoof, dying without male heirs, had bequeathed the whole of his estates to the Emir Heider, leaving merely a small pecuniary settlement on his daughter, who was married to Sheik Ali Jumblatt. The people of the Shoof petitioned the Emir, to confer the government of that district on the son-in-law of their former chief, supporting their request by a present of 50,000 piastres. The Emir at once agreed to their demand, and while he generously refused to accept more than half the proffered sum, sent for the Sheik, and giving him a Pelisse of honour, made him a grant of all the

property which had belonged to his deceased relation.

Motives of gratitude as well as a sense of interest, induced the Sheik to cultivate with assiduous care, the terms of intimacy and friendship which had been thus auspiciously commenced, between his family and the Ruler of the Lebanon; and the Emir Milheim was at no pains to conceal his favour and partiality for one, whom duty and affection had made one of his staunchest and most sincere supporters. On the other hand, the growing wealth and influence of the House of Jumblatt, and their constant relations with Deir-el-Kammar, excited the jealousy of the other Druse Sheiks, and the common feeling failed not soon to obtain weight and direction under the turbulent and restless guidance of the Amads, whose origin, as one in common with the Jumblatts, has been recorded in the preceding pages;* and the party thus gradually formed under their standard, assuming the name of their ancestor, Sheik Yesbeck, became distinguished as the "Yesbecky."

* Vol. i. p. 209.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Emir Milheim began ere long to perceive such unequivocal symptoms of uneasiness and discontent amongst the Druse Sheiks, that he determined on courting in a more especial manner the countenance and protection of the Pasha of Sidon, and, going down to pay him a visit, requested his assistance and support against the intrigues with which he was menaced and surrounded. The Pasha received him with the most marked attention and civility, and having repeatedly experienced the benefit of his services against the Metualis, who more than any other tribe was at this time giving the government cause of trouble and alarm, he hesitated not to exert his utmost to show the Emir such outward marks of sympathy and regard, as

might give him at least a moral ascendency amongst the Mountain chiefs.

The House of Aadm was at this time in possession of the Pashalicks of Damascus and Sidon. One of the oldest and wealthiest of the Mussulmen families of Damascus, its head at this period, enjoyed a power and authority in that city, which his influence almost succeeded in making hereditary; and a reputation for hospitality and magnificence which has thrown an imperishable lustre on his name and race. The Khan Assad Pasha, which the traveller now visits and admires as the principal ornament of Damascus, was the costly undertaking of this distinguished governor, and sufficiently attests his capacity and means.

Writing to his brother in the warmest terms of praise and recommendation in favour of the Emir, the Pasha of Sidon succeeded in obtaining for his protegé a mark of favour and partiality, which was especially calculated to strengthen his political position; and in the year 1748, Assaad Pasha il Aadm conferred on the Emir Milheim Shehaab, the government of Baalbec and the Bekaa. Armed with this new and important function, the Emir

returned to Deir-el-Kammar, and soon discovered in the general felicitations which he received, that the dissensions which had begun so unequivocally to manifest themselves amongst his feudal colleagues, would readily be appeased by a skilful application of the patronage and openings of emoluments which had fallen into his hands.

For the whole valley of Cœlo-Syria in its length and breadth, was now more or less at his disposal. Under the sanction and encouragement of their Emir, the Sheiks now farmed, or otherwise occupied, some of the most fertile portions of that luxuriant district, and forgot all causes of dissatisfaction, in the lucrative engagement of pursuits which more than doubled their wonted incomes. Assaad Pasha soon had reason however to repent of his temerity, in having intrusted the Governor of the Lebanon with such extended means of confirming and consolidating his power, for scarcely three years had elapsed, before the defalcation of the miri on the part of the Emir, was so considerable, as to demand the most effective measures for its recovery.

Finding repeated applications ineffectual, the

Pasha determined on using force to recover a revenue, for which he was himself held responsible, and leaving Damascus, advanced with all his disposable troops to Bur Elias, a village situated in the centre of the Bekaa. At a general assembly of all the Emirs and Sheiks of the Mountain, which the Emir Milheim convened near the sources of the Barook, the claims of the government were fully recapitulated, and perhaps acknowledged.

But whether from inability to pay, or from fear lest the harvest which was now accumulating on the threshing-floors would be seized by the Pasha in defalcation of payment, the opportune collection of such a mountain force (for the chiefs had brought with them, as usual, the great body of their retainers), afforded an occasion too valuable to be lost; and the Emir Milheim, whether voluntarily or led along by the general impulse, suddenly broke up the meeting, and leading on the mountaineers until they reached the heights above the Bekaa, fell upon the Turkish troops—to use the Arabic expression—"like a rapid," driving them back panic-struck and confused to the plain of Ejdady, in the Anti-Lebanon. A compromise

was some time afterwards effected, which, while it satisfied the Pasha, left the rights of the Mountain chiefs over the Bekaa and Baalbec uncurtailed.

An incident occurred somewhere about this period, highly characteristic of that spirit of honour and independence, which to this day distinguishes the Druses. An Aga of Damascus, named Achmet Aga Ilkoltokagi, having incurred the displeasure of the Pasha, fled from that city and sought an asylum with the Druse Sheiks of the House of Talhook, in their mountain abode at Heittat. The place of his refuge having been discovered by the authorities, the Pasha of Sidon, on the demand of his brother at Damascus, sent orders to the Emir Milheim at once to take measures for securing the fugitive.

The Emir, well knowing that a formal demand on his part to the Sheiks for the surrender of their guest would be unavailing, marched directly on Heittat with nearly 4000 men, without giving them notice or warning, and summoning Sheik Sheheen Talhook, the Macaatagee, warned him against the evil consequences which must ensue to himself and his family, if he should refuse to

give up an individual, whom the Turkish Government felt it necessary to take the most stringent measures for securing. The haughty chief, disdaining to reply to a message which threatened to commit him in the infringement of the sacred rites of hospitality, and not wishing at the same time to be the cause of fruitless bloodshed, immediately collected all the male members of his house, and departing by night, repaired with the Aga under his care and protection, to Rascheya.

The Emir, whatever might have been his private feelings of regard for the Sheik, felt it impossible to return, without having given some evidence of his willingness and power to execute the Pasha's commission, and after having entered and taken possession of Heittat, razed the mansions of the Sheiks to the ground. The severity of this reprisal enabled him more effectually to act the part of intercessor with the Pasha, for the pardon of Sheik Sheheen Talhook, which through his good offices was shortly after effected; and the Emir generously paid all the expenses necessary for rebuilding, what he had from political motives been obliged to pull down.

Sheik Sheheen Talhook appears to have been one of those active and enterprising partisans, who, according to circumstances, either promote or foil the measures and designs of a government. The Emir Milheim had found him a most useful agent in resisting the ever-recurring demands of the Pasha of Damascus on the produce of Cœlo-Syria; and it was under the pressure of his persevering and unceasing excursions in the Bekaa, that the former consented formally to abstain for the future from all interference in the latter district, on the yearly payment by the Governor of the Lebanon of 150 purses.

After this compact, the Mountain chiefs remained for many years undisturbed masters of those grounds and farms, which so greatly increased their means and wealth, and the possession of which by their descendants was, naturally enough on their part, looked upon and claimed as a prescriptive right, while it has been rejected and summarily treated by the Turkish Government as an usurpation.

As yet the jurisdiction of the Shehaabs had been confined to the Lebanon. But the Maans had

possessed Sidon; while the Tnoohs had for centuries been masters of Beyrout. The representations of the Emir Milheim to be appointed to the government of the latter town, had hitherto been ineffectual. Yaseen Bey, its actual governor, a Turkish officer, had given disgust to its inhabitants by the unpopularity of his proceedings. Given up to pleasure, and totally neglecting the interests of the community, both property and person had become insecure, and the absence of all police regulations had left Beyrout a prey to the most complete disorder.

The Emir Milheim, in order more thoroughly to show the Bey's incapacity for his trust, privately instructed Sheik Sheheen Talhook to make incursions on the plains of Beyrout, to stop the roads, and to establish a system of organised plunder and depredation in its environs. Reiterating his demands under these circumstances, to Othman Pasha, and guaranteeing the establishment and maintenance of good order, he at last obtained the much-coveted appointment, and Beyrout remained from his days until the time of the famous Djezzar, in the hands of the Shehaabs.

In the year 1756, the Emir, feeling the weight of age and infirmities, resigned the government of the Lebanon into the hands of his brother Munsoor, and retired with his family to Beyrout, where he spent the remaining four years of his life; a period remarkable for the private conversion of some of the Emirs of his family, to Christianity. The friendship which existed betwixt the Emir Milheim and Sheik Faadil-il-Haazin, the Patriarch of the Maronites, caused the latter to be a frequent and welcome visitor at the Emir's abode.

Permitted to superintend occasionally the studies of some of the younger members of the Emir's family, and to assist them in the perusal of such Arabic manuscripts as they possessed, whether of law, history, or romance, the transition to theological subjects was neither difficult nor repulsive, where terms of confidence and intimacy had been thus established; and it is said, that the Holy Father was permitted to assail the Koran with a freedom of criticism, which in any other Mohammedan circle, would have quickly promoted him to the glories of martyrdom; while, at the same time,

he failed not to urge upon his hearers, the superior claims and the awful importance of the Sacred volume, of which the Church in which he served was the accredited and infallible expounder. At the same time, the political importance of the people over whose spiritual destinies he presided, was ably and temperately exhibited, their constancy extolled, their allegiance and devotion to the House of Shehaab guaranteed. The painful doubts and uncertainties attendant on a contemplated change of faith, were thus smoothed and allayed, by allurements which combined worldly and celestial advantages. Some of the Emirs at length admitted, that the support of 50,000 warriors would be cheaply purchased by a private adhesion to their religion and creed; and though, perhaps, at first, it required some moral courage to seek the prizes of ambition, through an avowal which, at least, was novel, and might prove dangerous,* the dictates of conscience, real or imaginary, ultimately prevailed. The superior merits of the doctrines of Christianity to those of

* By the Turkish law, it is death for a Mohammedan to become a Christian.

Mohammedanism were ostensibly acknowledged. The Church hailed with joy a new and influential accession to her fold, while Rome grasped prospectively the sword of temporal power in the Lebanon.

CHAPTER V.

THE origin of the Maronites has been a subject of much discussion. All admit that the name Maronite is derived from a monk of the name of Maroun. But there were two monks of that name, one who flourished at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, dying in the year 433, and who resided in Djebel Koros, one day's distance from Aleppo. The other, a zealous supporter of the Monothelite heresy, lived in the seventh century, on the plains of Hamah, the ancient Epiphania. The Maronites themselves assert, that their nation has always been faithful to the Roman Church, and claim as their father and founder, the pious monk of Mount Koros.

The learned of Europe have decided that the

Maronites were originally an heretical sect, and trace back their origin to the Monk of Hamah; some adding, that the Maronites joined the Latin communion, under Pope Gregory XIII., in the sixteenth century; others, under Calixtus III., in the fifteenth century. The latter is the opinion adopted amongst others, by Naironi in his "dissertatio de origine, nomine, et religione Maronitarum." The testimony of history confirms this decision, and however the Maronites may endeavour to rescue the memory of their ancestors from the charge of heresy, the fact is plain and undeniable.

The period of their joining the Romish Church has been, however, erroneously stated. One irrefragable authority, Nicephorus, in his Ecclesiastical History, will suffice to settle even this disputed question, and it may be summarily stated, upon his testimony, that the Maronites were originally a Monothelite sect, founded by the Monk Maroun, who lived in a convent, on the banks of the Orontes, near Hamah, in the seventh century; and that their abjuration of that heresy took place in presence of Amaury, Latin Patriarch of Antioch, in the year of our Lord 1167.

William of Tyre alludes in his Chronicle, to the Maronites, under the term "fideles," who descended from their mountains to come and testify to the Crusaders (first Crusade), "tender sentiments of fraternity," adding that the latter when arrived at Tripoli, addressed themselves to the "fideles of the Lebanon, as to wise and sober-minded men, and having an exact knowledge of roads and localities, to ascertain what would be the safest and most practicable road to Jerusalem." As the history of the Archbishop of Tyre is brought down to the year 1184, the adhesion of the Maronites to the Romish Church during his life, amply justified his calling them "the faithful."

The way, however, in which Jacques de Vitry speaks of the Maronites, leaves no manner of doubt on the subject, and must be admitted to be conclusive. This prelate flourished about the end of the twelfth century, and was Bishop of Acre. His history, which is called "Historia Hierosolymitana," embraces every variety of topic, and is replete with information on the general customs, manners, and productions of various countries in the East; and as he was specially commissioned by Pope Hono-

rius III., to give him a detailed account of the state of the Christian colonies, and of the provinces which they occupied, it is certain that whatever he advances on a people so remarkable by their character and position as the Maronites, must have been founded on sound inquiry, which his residence near them enabled him so easily to institute, and supported by unquestionable facts.

"Men," says he, "armed with bows and arrows, and skilful in battle, inhabit the mountains in considerable numbers, in the province of Phœnicia, not far from the town of Biblos. They are called Maronites, from the name of a certain man, their master, Maroun, a heretic, who affirmed that there was in Jesus Christ but one will or operation.* A certain Bishop of Antioch, named Macarius, was the first inventor of this error. He was, together with his followers, condemned in the Sixth Council of Constantinople, held in the thirteenth year of Constantine IV., surnamed Pogonatus, and the second of Agathon, Bishop of Rome, at which one hundred and sixty-eight fathers assisted; and

* The word Monothelite, is derived from two Greek words, μονος, "one," and θελησις, "will."

in quality of heresiarch, he was chained down in the bonds of anathema, and expelled from the Church."

The author stops to discuss and combat this heresy, and goes on to say, that "the Christians of the Lebanon, dupes of this *diabolical* error of Maroun, remained separate from the Church nearly 500 years." "At last, however," adds the old chronicler, "their hearts being turned, they made profession of the Catholic faith in presence of the venerable Father Amaury, Patriarch of Antioch, abjured their error, and adopted the traditions of the holy Roman Church. The prelates of the East, with the exception of the Latins, neither wear ring nor mitre, nor carry the pastoral staff. In place of using bells to summon the people to Church, they strike on iron tablets with a hammer; but the Maronites, in testimony of obedience, follow the rites and customs of the Latins. Their patriarch assisted at the general Council of Lateran,* solemnly held in Rome, during the pontificate of the venerable Innocent III."

* The twelfth general Council, and the fourth of Lateran, held in the year 1215.

The Monothelite tenet, by whomsoever originated, whether by Macarius, Bishop of Antioch, or as some say, by Theodore, Bishop of Pharan, in Arabia, first attracted notice about the year 630, and soon made the most astonishing progress. Strange as it may seem, the sees of Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria, almost simultaneously gave in their adhesion to this corrupt notion, or rather this offspring of Eutychianism, while the Emperor Heraclius gave it the moral support of his influence and adoption. Countenanced by such authority, the promulgators of Monothelism increased their exertions in every direction, and with such success, that in a few years almost every vestige of apostolical truth, in the East, became merged in the prevailing heresy.

Monothelism, was professedly exhibited by its propagators, as a remedy against the error of Eutyches, who taught that the human nature of Christ had no real existence, as such, after what he called "the union." The Monothelites, on the contrary, admitted that our Lord was both God and Man, but denied to his manhood the distinct possession of a will and idiosyncratic operation of

its own; which doctrine, in effect, as much nullifies the Humanity of our Lord, as Eutychianism.

The Monk Maroun, probably in conjunction with, and under the auspices of, the Bishop of Antioch, became remarkable for the zeal and perseverance with which he endeavoured to gain proselytes. A large and substantial convent arose on the banks of the Orontes, which quickly displayed a fraternity of several hundred monks, while missionaries were dispatched into the mountains of Syria, and more particularly into the Lebanon, to gain converts to the new sect.

Up to this period the Syrian Church had maintained much of the simplicity of Christianity, as it was taught and preached by the Apostle James, and his successors in the Church of Jerusalem. The Christians of the Lebanon, however, were unable to resist the general contagion, and under the reign of the Emperor Constans, their adhesion to the teaching of Mar* Maroun seems to have been fully and finally established. They had long been distinguished as able and useful warriors, and

* *Mar* in Arabic means Saint, a title with which the Monk Maroun was unanimously invested by his disciples.

a considerable body, headed by their Emirs, had joined the army of the Emperor Heraclius, in his war against Chosroes II., King of Persia, A.D. 625.

At the commencement of the seventh century, the entire range of the mountains, from Antioch to Jerusalem, was in the hands of the Syrian Christians, who formed a political power under Chiefs or Emirs, who exercised an hereditary government. One of these Emirs, called Kesra, gave his name to the district now known as the Kesrouan, and the Emirs Ayoub and Yoosuff are spoken of in the highest terms of eulogium, for their valour and prowess in their expeditions against the Saracens, by the Greek historians Theophanus and Chadranus.

That a nation so numerous and formidable as to have been considered the rampart of Christianity in Syria, should have attracted the peculiar regard and attention of the Greek Emperors, is not to be wondered at, and accordingly, when these Monarchs successively adopted, according to their individual fantasies, the futile project of binding the minds of their subjects into one common mode of belief—to gain the consent and support of the Christians of the Lebanon, became an object of no inconsiderable

importance. That portion of them, the community established by Maroun, who had adopted the Monothelite heresy, rapidly increased in numbers and importance under the sympathizing patronage of Heraclius* and Constans, and were repeatedly honoured by those emperors with distinguishing tokens of favour and approval.

The accession, however, of Constantine IV., surnamed Pogonatus, to the throne of Constantinople, at once reversed this state of affairs, as it happily averted from the Christian faith, a fate which threatened to consign it to absolute ruin and degradation. At the Sixth General Council, held at Constantinople, in the year 680, and the thirteenth of the reign of that Emperor, as has been previously observed, the Monothelite heresy was anathematized, and its several abettors condemned, among whom was Honorius, Bishop of Rome.†

The infallibility of the Roman See did not, on

* The Emperor Heraclius, was rejected as a Maronite, from the walls of Emessa, and found refuge in the Monastery of Maroun, on the banks of the Orontes.—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. viii., page 355.

† Honorius died in 639. This Pope wrote two letters to Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, in which he maintained the Monothelite doctrine.

this occasion at least, save its pastor from the posthumous scandal of excommunication, and the legates of Bishop Agathon, who were present at the deliberations, seem by their consent to the sentence, to have been perfectly unconscious of the doctrine that the Romish Church could not err. Whatever may have been the summons issued on this occasion to the Maronites, it is certain that in the year 685 they nominated to themselves a Patriarch who, known to this day as Mar Yoohanna Maroun, established his See at Caphar Hai, in Bellad Batroon, which continued to be the Patriarchal residence, until the year 1440, when it was removed to the Convent of Kanobin, in the valley of the Kadisha.*

It may justly be inferred, that the Maronites had obstinately refused to listen to any overtures inducing them to comply with the orthodox standard of faith, as laid down by the clergy of Constantinople; for, in the year 694, the sword was drawn against them, and an Imperial army was dispatched expressly to reduce them to obedience by force of arms.

* See vol. i. p. 61.

Marching first in the direction of the Orontes, the famous convent of Mar Maroun was ravaged and burnt to the ground.

The Maronites in the meantime had made the most active preparations for defence, and assembled all their warriors in the neighbourhood of Ehden, watching from these almost inaccessible heights, the progress of the enemy.

The Imperial generals advanced as far as Tripoli with uninterrupted success, and such of the Christians as had joined them were called the Melkites, from the Arabic word Melik or King, signifying that they had espoused the party of the Emperor or King,—a name which the Greek Christians in Syria retain to this day.

Avoiding the difficult defile of Batroon, the troops now ascended the sides of the mountains, and marched on the province of Koora, whose gentle undulations of ground facilitated their progress towards the strongholds of the Maronites, or, as they were now denominated, "the Marada," the rebels.

The loose and disorderly movements of the Imperial army, who probably contemplated no immediate

danger in an open country, had been observed by the Maronites from their commanding outposts, and deeming the moment favourable for a sudden attack, they rushed down from their rocky defences, and vigorously commenced an action, which waving to and fro with alternate success and defeat, was at last brought to a decisive crisis under the walls of Ameeoor, a village standing on an elevated knoll at the eastern extremity of a noble and extensive plain, the most fertile part of the Koora.

The Imperialists were completely defeated, and their two generals, Mooreek and Mooreikan, slain. The conquerors, after the battle, gave the latter the honours of a decent sepulture, the site of which is still shown by the Maronites, as a proof and memorial of the heroic gallantry with which their ancestors maintained their independence. No further attempts appear to have been made to bring the Maronites within the pale of orthodoxy, and for the five succeeding centuries, these sturdy Monothelites continued to hug their religious phantom with undeviating zeal and tenacity.

During that period the Maronites were ruled by Emirs and Mukudameen, who were acknow-

ledged by the Moslem power, then dominant in Syria, and intrusted with the jurisdiction of the various districts which they inhabited between Tripoli and Beyrout; a mark of trust and consideration, however, which was not obtained by them until years of desperate resistance had shown the Arab invaders, that all attempts to reduce these mountaineers were vain and ineffectual.

The southern portions of the Mountain were completely ravaged and laid desolate, and the Arab tribes, who entered into possession of them, A.D. 821, found them a barren waste. But, throughout the most brilliant and triumphant period of Moslem ascendency, the Christian band which occupied the highest ranges of the Lebanon, bade defiance to the proud mandate of the Infidel, and enjoyed inviolate, amidst their glorious fastnesses, the rights and guerdons of religious freedom.

CHAPTER VI.

It may be difficult, at this distant period, fully to comprehend and appreciate the intense expectations, the absorbing interest, and the almost delirium of joy and enthusiasm which animated the breasts of the native Christians, on the approach of those mighty hosts which advanced into their land, bearing high in the face of Heaven that sacred emblem of their faith, which they in the East had so long with bleeding hearts been obliged to veil or conceal, as an object almost unworthy of the light of day.

To those, however, who have dwelt amongst and become familiar with the sentiments, feeling, and language of the Christians of various denominations who now occupy the same country, it will require

no great stretch of imagination to picture the blind credulity, the exaggerated hopes, and the superstitious acts of folly, which no doubt agitated and distinguished their ancestors and co-religionists, during the frantic paroxysm of the First Crusade.

Though living under the tolerant dominion of the Turkish Government, which grants to every sect indiscriminately the most perfect freedom of religious worship, an innate longing for supremacy makes each of these sects look with earnest expectation to the presumed ascendency which would be given it, by the advent to political power and territorial possession in Syria, of that particular European power to which it stands related by community of religious rites and ceremonies.

It is needless to say that the potentates of France and Russia, as the great representatives of the Roman Catholic and Greek persuasions, may flatter themselves they thus divide between them the "tender sentiments of fraternity" which at present exist in the breasts of the Christians of the Lebanon.

It would be difficult to decide which is the most ludicrous,—the haughty self-sufficiency and conceit

of the Greeks, or the ignorant bigotry and fanaticism of the Maronites. The former constantly indulge in the most extravagant descriptions of the splendour and power of the Russian monarchy, while they refer with the most childish pride and gratification, to the trifling presents which the Emperor occasionally condescends to transmit to their insignificant community; having absolutely the vanity to suppose, that they share in the renown and consideration which he enjoys as the head of so extensive an empire.

The French would still find in the latter, the "fideles," who welcomed Godfrey de Bouillon and his associates.

Whenever two or three ships of large tonnage loom in the horizon, a thousand eyes are directed from the heights of the Lebanon to examine their course, and dimensions; while the cry is taken up and passed from mouth to mouth with credulous enthusiasm,—"The French have arrived; there they are." And a momentary frenzy agitates the hearts of this simple population, who though they live in the undisturbed enjoyment of all the sacred offices and consolations of their religion, yet

are perpetually urged by their priesthood to look forward to the coming of the French, as to a grand jubilee, when, under their victorious standards, the Maronites shall be enabled to purge the whole range of the Lebanon, of all Druses, Infidels, and Heretics.

It is but just to observe, that the more enlightened and well-educated amongst them have long awoke from this delusive dream, and sufficiently understand the clamorous vanity and uncalculating presumption of that nation, on whose external sympathy and support, their habits of thought and education had too long perhaps induced them to depend; but the feelings of the mass are moved by the secret springs of muzzled intolerance and rampant sectarianism; and there can be little doubt that the presence of a French battalion on the coast, would suffice to rally 20,000 mountaineers round the tricolor, ready and eager to embark in any cause which their allies might propound.

Some of the chiefs and principal clergy of the Maronites accompanied the Crusaders to Jerusalem, and eagerly sought to ingratiate themselves with

their Frank deliverers, by a ready attendance at the service, and, at least, an apparent consent to the doctrines, of the Papal Church; for where the vitality of religion is wanting, the importance of a tenet or a form soon vanishes before the allurements of temporal gain and advantage. The Maronites of the present day, warranted indeed both by historical and traditional records, allude in terms of pride and satisfaction to the service done by their ancestors to the armies of the Crusaders, and estimate in round numbers 50,000 of their population, as having fallen under the standards of the Cross.

It is evident that the conquerors of Jerusalem, whether for past services, or with a view to obtain a continuation of their influence and support in the important position of the Lebanon, gave the Maronites early and repeated proofs of their esteem and consideration.

In the year 1112, Baldwin I. sent a Legate to Rome, to inform the Pope of the successes of the Christian armies, while his Queen wrote a letter to his Holiness on the same occasion, to inform him that she had purchased a piece of ground and

built thereon a church, at the cost of 80,000 dinars; and that she had given to the Maronites the church of St. Helen, and the Cave of the true Cross in the Church of the Resurrection.* Such concessions could only have been obtained, by the ready concurrence of the Maronite clergy, in the faith and doctrines of that Church which the Crusaders were upholding in the East.

During the early part of the twelfth century, the communications between the Patriarch of the Maronites and the Papal See were of frequent recurrence; but the complete adhesion of that people to the Roman Church was not effected, as has been previously observed, until the year 1167. After the expulsion of the Franks from Syria, the Maronites had again to defend their independence against the overwhelming attacks of the Mameluke sovereigns of Egypt. Their leader in these conflicts was Yoohanna Maroun, to whom their own historians, such as Bishop Gibrael il Kullaiey and others, give the title of king.

* The Maronites declare they possess the original grant of this spot, and only wait the assistance of the French to make good their claims against the Greeks, who have usurped it.

After a protracted war, during which the whole of the Lebanon, excepting the higher portions of the district of Bisherry, had been subjected to the most relentless devastation, that chief found it expedient to profess at least an outward submission to the Mohammedan invaders. In the year 1300, the scattered remnants of those military colonies, which for two centuries had kept the East in a state of perpetual turmoil, were permitted by Malek Aschraf to choose the place of their retreat.

The island of Cyprus became thronged with a multitude of Frank and Arab Christians, who sought there an asylum from the reproach and contumely of their conquerors. Many Maronite families determined to share the fortunes of their allies and co-religionists, and, with persevering attachment, followed them through the various wanderings to which they were exposed, during the aggressive sway of the Moslem monarchs, who from this period outvied each other in the glory and importance of their achievements.

Many of them fell in the defence of Lampsacus, when in 1522, the Turks attacked Cyprus; and

faithful to the standard of the Hospitallers, followed that order to Candia and Sicily, establishing themselves finally with these knights in Malta, where their descendants, together with those of other emigrants, who flocked thither from various parts of Africa on the final disruption of the Crusades, perpetuated the Arab dialect in the mongrel form under which it at present exists in that island.

The temporary submission of Yoohanna Maroun proved but a prelude to a resolution which has found its counterpart in modern annals. Unable to brook the degradation and oppression which had overtaken his compatriots, he determined on leaving a country which had ceased to offer the advantages of freedom and security, and in the year 1318, while the Mussulmen were vigorously besieging Djebail, then a large and important town, he privately hired a vessel, and, placing on board the whole of his followers and attendants, set fire to the city in its four quarters and sailed for Cyprus.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE occur various passages in the Maronite records, which would indicate, that the mighty movement of the Reformation had extended to the coasts of Syria. It is stated, that in the year 1494 a Maronite wanted to alter the religion of the Maronites; but a monk dissuaded him from prosecuting his efforts. In the year 1515, Pope Leo X. wrote to the Patriarch Simon, strongly enjoining him to keep his flock firm to all the existing doctrines, rules, and regulations of the Maronite Church; warning him to take the promptest measures for the suppression of all innovations in religion whatever, and exhorting him to act the part of a good and faithful shepherd to his sheep.

In the same year, the famous Maronite author

and theologian, Bishop Gibrael il Kullaiey, put forth a controversial work, in which he severely denounces all such as should endeavour by plausible arguments and delusive subtleties, to make the Maronites abandon the standard of their faith. In the year 1520, "some liberty of commenting on the part of a Maronite, was strenuously put down by an especial order from the Pope." Clement VII. sent a Legate to the Maronites in 1526, expressly to visit all the districts inhabited by them in the Lebanon, to convene provincial councils, and to pardon all sins whatever.

The Power of the Keys, at this very epoch so successfully attacked in Europe, was most unreservedly wielded in the East, and the Papal See put forth its claims to implicit submission and obedience, both safely and attractively, amidst the elements of darkness and superstition which surrounded the "fideles" of the Lebanon. From numerous testimonials which appear in the Maronite records, it would appear, that the zeal and success with which the Maronite clergy protected their flocks from the contagious heresy which threatened to infect them, excited a most lively

interest at the Vatican, and elicited from a long line of Pontiffs, expressions of praise and admiration, which, conveyed as they were in all the magniloquence of Eastern hyperbole, must have been peculiarly efficacious in cementing the attachment to the See of Rome, of a people whose position and circumstances naturally lead them to look to Europe for support and protection.

The most remarkable of these documents consist, in a letter from Pius IV. to the Patriarch of the Maronites, dated Sept. 1, 1562, and one from Clement VIII., April 1, 1595. Paul V., in two letters, one dated Jan. 13, 1606, and another Dec. 28, 1608, addressed to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Maronites, extols them for their fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church, and compares them to roses amongst thorns. Urban VIII., in an epistle, dated August 30, 1625, can scarcely find terms sufficiently adequate to express his admiration of the unyielding orthodoxy of the Maronite clergy, apostrophizing them as the honour of Carmel, the glory of Lebanon, the glory of Zion, &c. Clement XI., in various epistles, the latest of which bears date Jan. 29, 1721, gives his unflinching testimony that, the Maronites ever adhered to

the Roman Church from the earliest days of Christianity, having been always faithful, "semper fideles," to the Catholic faith.

Perhaps it would be hard to press upon his Holiness, for this slight ecclesiastical error, or to awaken the Maronites from the dreamy delight with which they refer to the above named testimonials, as indisputable proofs of their innocence of all anterior heresies; but though the Monothelite reminiscences may not be agreeable to such exemplary votaries of Rome as they now are, the equally effective and far more impartial testimony of history cannot be distorted, in order to countenance the Maronite clergy in their vehement but utterly untenable vindication of the religious tenets of their ancestors.

Though joining the communion of the Church of Rome, towards the close of the twelfth century, it was not until the fifteenth century, that the Maronite clergy consented to acknowledge its supremacy in matters of ecclesiastical discipline. That spirit of independence which they had displayed when existing as a separate sect, they carried into their communications with the Sovereign Pontiffs; and, for three centuries, there existed a Christian church

in the Lebanon, Popish in all its forms and doctrines, saving the cardinal point of submission to the Pope.

This point appears to have been carried during the pontificate of Eugenius IV.; and, in the year 1439, the Patriarch of the Maronites was invited to attend at a General Council,* held in Florence, to which all the Greek and Romish Bishops in Christendom were summoned. Nevertheless, a general sanction was given by Eugenius IV. to the Maronite prelates, which none of his successors have dared to rescind, to hold provincial councils for the regulation of matters of faith and discipline, a Legate from Rome being simply present to witness the proceedings, and transmit his report to the Pope. A very important council of this description was held in the year 1736, at Deir il Wuzzy, in the Kesrouan, at which a Maronite Bishop, Yousuf Simaan Assemaani, appeared as Papal Legate. Its rules and regulations were confirmed by Bene-

* This was the seventeenth General Council, held for the union of the Greek and Latin Church. John Palæologus, the Greek Emperor; Joseph, Patriarch of Constantinople; and sixteen Oriental Metropolitans, or Archbishops, together with a large number of Eastern Prelates, attended it. It assembled first at Ferrara in 1437.

dictus XIV., in 1742. Such councils are still occasionally convened by the Patriarch as circumstances require.

A Patriarch and twelve Bishops preside over the Maronite Church in the East, but of the latter four are titular, or *in rebus partibus*. The Patriarch is chosen by the Bishops in secret conclave, and by ballot. A Sheik, generally from the House of Habashe, stands as a sentinel at the door of the room in which the conclave is sitting, to prevent all communication from without. The debates usually last for many days, and even weeks; at last, when the choice is made, the Bishops present kneel down and kiss the new Patriarch's hands; the Patriarch immediately writes letters to all the chief nobles of the Mountain, informing them of his nomination. The latter lose no time in assembling, to pay him their respects, and make their obeisance. A Pelisse of honour shortly afterwards arrives for the Patriarch, from the Governor of the Lebanon. Fires, and rejoicing, and illumination, extend throughout the whole range of the Maronite districts; a petition is now drawn up, to be sent to the Pope, praying him to confirm the choice which has just been made, and signed by the prin-

cipal chiefs of the Maronite Houses of Shehaab, Bilemma, Mraad, Haazin, Habase, and Dahdah. It is open, however, to the clergy, or any party, to protest against the nomination. The expression of such a feeling must also be referred to Rome, and in such a case the Pope sends a special Legate, to inquire into all the circumstances connected with such dissensions. The Pope, however, never fails at once to confirm a selection, which has the support of the feudal aristocracy and principal clergy of the Lebanon.

The eight regular bishoprics are as follows: Aleppo, Tripoli, Djebail, Baalbec, Damascus, Cyprus, Beyrout, Tyre and Sidon. When a Bishop dies, the Patriarch writes to the principal people of the village under the jurisdiction of the deceased prelate, requesting them to assemble together, and nominate a priest to the vacant see; should there be an unanimity of voices, the Patriarch confirms their selection; if on the contrary they cannot agree, he desires them to send him the names of three priests, and from this list he selects one for the Bishopric. The Patriarch of the Maronites is styled the Patriarch of Antioch, and usually takes the name of Peter—a puerile affectation and pre-

sumptuous inference, intended to denote an official descent from the Apostle Peter.

His power is despotic, and from his decision there is no appeal, either in temporal or spiritual affairs; even the Pope's Legate who resides constantly in the Lebanon, and is supposed to superintend all the ecclesiastical proceedings of the Maronite Church, has no influence over the Patriarch, beyond what may be obtained by personal superiority of character. Within the last few years, indeed, the Legate has in various ways advanced pretensions on the part of the Pope, to more direct and absolute interference in ministerial appointments amongst the Maronite clergy, especially those connected with the convents; but they have been hitherto met with a spirit of independence and determination, which clearly evinces that the "fideles" of the Lebanon, are not quite yet prepared to merge into the degrading position of mere satellites of Rome. The income of the Patriarch may amount to about 5,000*l.* a-year, derived principally from lands set apart exclusively for the office. He obtains likewise a sixth of the revenue of the Bishops.

The power of an ecclesiastical dignitary, who is

looked up to by the members of his Church almost as a temporal prince, may well be supposed to be of considerable weight, and to influence, in no small degree, their general proceedings; and in this respect the present Patriarch, Yousuf il Haazin, presents a most favourable contrast to his predecessor, who sprang from the House of Habashe. While the latter sanctioned and even promoted the worst feelings of rivalry and animosity on the part of the Maronites towards the Druses, and recklessly urged on the unhappy civil war which, in 1845, devastated and laid waste the southern range of the Lebanon; the former, by his mild and conciliatory demeanour, and the forbearance and toleration which characterize his intercourse with all the public authorities, particularly the Turkish, even under circumstances which might seem to justify resistance, or at least remonstrance, has assisted most materially in allaying amongst the Maronites, those restless and intriguing tendencies which, fomented as they were by the agents of an European power which it is needless to mention, had of late years entailed upon them so much misery and degradation.

As his charity and generosity are unbounded, (indeed, the residence of the Patriarch, whether at Bekerke or at Deeman, is the constant resort of visitors of all classes, whether on duty or business,) the resources of the patriarchal See, in the hands of such a liberal administrator as its present occupant, are somewhat overtaxed to meet the current expenses; and, two years ago, a friendly letter from Pius IX., gently admonished the Patriarch Yousuf, that a spirit of economy and arrangement was not incompatible with a well-regulated hospitality.

There are four other Patriarchs resident in Mount Lebanon, who acknowledge the Papal jurisdiction,—the Armenian-Catholic, Syriac-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, and Chaldean-Catholic. These sects, with the exception of the Greek-Catholics, are comparatively small and insignificant, and need simply to be alluded to.

The Greek-Catholics in Syria are deserters from the Orthodox Greek Church, the harvest of a most profuse sowing of gold by emissaries from Rome, about the beginning of the eighteenth century. They retain all the prayers and feast-days of their

former Church, with such additional doctrines and tenets as are necessarily entailed upon them by their allegiance to the Pope. They can boast of some of the best built, and best endowed convents and nunneries in the Lebanon, and, from whatever cause arising, some of the most respectable merchants in Syria are of this persuasion. The ductility of gold is proverbial, and it may perhaps not unjustly be surmised, that the splendid and advantageous commencement of the Papal connexion by their ancestors, laid the foundation of a worldly prosperity which neither their position, their talents, nor opportunities, would otherwise (probably) have enabled them to attain.

The Maronite Bishops obtain the tenths of the produce of the land, besides various other emoluments, which usually accrue to the pastoral office in Roman Catholic dioceses. The archdeacons, priests, and clergy, exist on the voluntary contributions of the people, in addition to the sums paid for masses. The lower orders of the clergy are generally in indigent circumstances, as their superiors have to be served first, out of the general funds extorted from the superstitious subserviency of their followers.

In fact, in worldly as in spiritual, nay, in all family matters, amongst the Maronites, the priest rules supreme. Constantly prowling about from house to house, not an incident, however trivial, escapes his vigilance, while the constant and ever-recurring instrumentality of the confessional, satisfies the utmost cravings of a curiosity that is only appetized by indulgence. No Maronite peasant dares to marry without getting the consent of the priest. Nor, indeed, is this submission to the priest astonishing; custom and ancient usage have made it hereditary throughout the entire population; and, lest education might in the least degree dissipate the *prestige* which time has so thoroughly implanted in the breasts of these simple people, the very school-books which are placed in the hands of their children, are carefully compiled so as to increase the natural awe with which they regard their spiritual guides.

In a Maronite Catechism, the following queries and answers occur:—

"Q. If you were to see an angel and a priest walking together, which should you adore the most?

"A. The priest.

"Q. And how would you show your adoration for the priest?

"A. By falling down and kissing the ground on which he is walking.

"Q. Why is the priest to be adored more than the angel?

"A. Because he is so vastly superior to the angel.

"Q. Why so?

"A. Because the angel is a minister and servant of God, whereas the priest can command God to descend from heaven, as in the Mass!!!"

The Maronite priests also sell localities in heaven to their parishioners, by the yard; and many a superstitious Maronite in the Lebanon, has at some period or other of his life, paid a round sum to his priest for a yard or a few yards in the celestial regions, in the full belief that his right is thus secured to him for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is not unusual to see Maronite priests with large families; but though the marriage state is tolerated amongst them, a priest cannot marry after having taken holy orders. All the Christian sects in the East are in this particular distinguished from the Church of Rome. A married bishop, however, is unknown. Although the priests are for the most part educated to a certain degree, the Syriac is not generally much studied amongst them, which is the more extraordinary, considering that the church services are all performed in that language; the consequence is, that it is not uncommon for services to be performed where neither the officiating priest nor the congregation understand one word of what is being said, and a long

sing-song mumble, unintelligible to all parties, constitutes the morning's devotions!

The Maronite clergy had formerly lands at Rome, the revenues of which were appropriated to keeping up a seminary for the education of young Maronites from the Lebanon; these were confiscated by the French during the first revolutionary war: there is still, however, a school in existence at Rome for the same purpose, and every year a certain number of Maronite candidates for the ministry, are sent thither to complete their studies.

Nowhere is the conventual system more flourishing than in the Lebanon. Indeed, the theory of a life uncontaminated by worldly temptations and corruptions, whatever the practice may now be, seems to have been long familiar to the Christian Church in the East. The grottoes of the innumerable anchorites who occupied the mountains of Syria during the third and fourth centuries, may still be seen in various parts of the Lebanon. The rocky and precipitous sides of the valley of Kadisha, or the Holy Valley, in which now stands conspicuous the convent of Kanobin, seem to have

been thickly studded with these solitary and abstracted aspirants after angelic perfection.

Monkery in the present day, however, has abandoned the dismal caves and holes in the rocks, where the sun scarcely penetrated, and where the human voice rarely broke upon the gloomy solitude of their occupants. It has become more social and gregarious—more awake to the charms and attractions of nature, and amply recompenses itself for its exclusion from the busy scenes of life, by the perseverance and assiduity with which it cultivates the means and opportunities of enjoyment so peculiarly within its reach.

Accordingly, the Maronite convents are seen to occupy the most delightful sites in the Lebanon; while, from their airy eminences, the eye rests upon extensive and enchanting prospects, embracing the most picturesque and romantic scenery. The grounds in their immediate vicinity are generally laid out in large plantations of the mulberry, the olive, the vine, and the fig, the exclusive property of the monks. Their principal occupation is to cultivate, or at least to superintend the cultivation, of the fertile compartments and terraced gardens into

which their lands are divided. Their dress is simple and coarse, and well adapted to the rudest labours of the field. It consists of a black frock coat, and reaches to the knees, confined round the waist by a leathern girdle, and surmounted by a hood, which can be drawn over the head. This attire is called a "cacooly." It is of Gaulish origin, and was adopted by the Romans, with whom it passed into the East. Juvenal alludes to it in his Eighth Satire, where the etymology of the word "cacooly" is clearly seen.

> "Si nocturnus adulta
> Tempora santonico velas adoperta *cucullo*."
> Juv. *Sat.* viii.

To an uninitiated observer, it may appear strange to see such fine possessions in such hands; and when one reflects that they have been bought and accumulated, by contributions levied on the community, it is not unnatural to demand, what is the benefit which the community derives from these assemblages of single men, scattered all over the country? At all events, the Maronite monks have contrived to impress their compatriots with a very lively sense of their importance; for, by one

means or another, they have succeeded in getting hold of nearly a fourth of the entire surface of the Mountain.

The greater part of the estates of the Maronite Emirs and Sheiks has gradually passed into their hands; these chiefs having been induced to exchange the worthless tenure of earthly possessions for that of heavenly habitations, which they firmly believe are secured to them by the powerful and unfailing efficacy of the prayers and masses, poured forth on their behalf by their monastic confessors.

The House of Haazin has been more especially plucked under these saintly pretences, and many of their Sheiks, now thriving on the precarious produce of a few acres of ground, may glory or repine, according to the growth or decline of their spiritual attainments, over the devotion or folly of their ancestors.

Not content, moreover, with what they already have, agents from different convents periodically traverse the mountains, and go from village to village, begging the most trifling contributions from the poorest peasant. The monk enters the

cottage with the air and assurance of being its proprietor rather than a visitor, and as if he were going to confer, not to receive charity. The inmates rise on his entrance, and rush to kiss his hand, while greetings of welcome, not indeed very sincere, and somewhat constrained in tone and manner, salute his ear.

With the most pompous and mysterious gestures, the holy Father ere he condescends to be seated, pulls forth from his bosom a small square wooden case, about the dimensions of the largest size of miniature, and, unclasping it, exposes to the gaze of his nearest neighbours in the family circle, the picture of some saint, generally St. Anthony or St. George and the Dragon, consisting of a few brilliant patches of red and blue paint, with a gilt collar and bracelets stuck on, or of the Virgin Mary, with her usual look of tenderness and submission, and wearing a very gorgeous-looking gilt circlet round her head. Whatever it may be, the surface of the sacred tableau is black and greasy, from the thousands of kisses which have been fervently expended upon it by its superstitious admirers.

The most abject obeisance, with sundry crossings and genuflexions, is now offered to the dirty daub. The process of kissing it goes round the room, and after a few minutes only, for time is urgent, and money must be made, the monk takes his departure with additions to his pecuniary resources, proportionate to the means of those whom he has been honouring by his presence.

The credulous enthusiasm at times displayed on these occasions, is almost inconceivable; women will sometimes strip themselves of their most valuable silver ornaments to load these privileged purveyors of the Saints, in the hopes of obtaining their favour and protection. And, indeed, the description of monastic life circulated amongst the people, is such as to arouse their warmest admiration, and excite their liveliest sympathies.

Within those spacious buildings which meet their gaze on the most delightful summits of the Lebanon, exists a sacred and holy brotherhood, whose chief employment is prayer;—prayers for themselves, prayers for all, but especially prayers for those who will let them have their money! What fastings, what self-denial, what exemplary denunciation

of all worldly thoughts and feelings, distinguish these exemplary recluses!

Despising wealth, and shunning every species of pleasure, nay, leading a life of the most painful mortification, these pious monks devote their whole thoughts to the contemplation of a future world; and, constantly engaged in devotional exercises of the most absorbing nature, not only ascend themselves to a degree of spiritual perfection and purity unattainable by the vulgar herd of Christ's followers, but become the privileged dispensers of spiritual gifts to their weaker brethren, and the chosen and accepted mediators between man and the Saints of the Most High! What a consolation, what a privilege, then, must it be, to be allowed to contribute even so much as a mite to the maintenance of such rare sanctity. At the convents, the best silk, the best oil, the best wine, the best confectionary,—indeed, the best of everything, is invariably to be found!

There are three religious orders in the Lebanon; the Lebanines, the Aleppines, and the Antonines, which are recruited from all the sects indiscriminately. The former comprise exclusively natives of

the Lebanon; the next, those of Aleppo; and the third, those who enter the convents dedicated to St. Anthony. There are upwards of an hundred monasteries, and nearly ten thousand monks scattered throughout the Mountain, more than half of which belong to the Maronites. There are eight European convents under the jurisdiction of the Pope's Legate. The temporal affairs of the convents are directed by a superior monk, called Reis-el-Aam, a sort of accountant-general, who regulates all the disbursements of his fraternity. Lest the monks should form any particular local attachments, they are removed from convent to convent every six months, in a kind of rotation. They are, in general, exceedingly ignorant; but skilful in such trades as are necessary for their own wants and necessities.

The Maronites consider themselves to be under French protection; and the following documents certainly warrant them in looking more especially to France for favour and sympathy.

Letter of Protection

Granted to the Most Reverend Patriarch of Antioch, and to the Maronite Nation, by the King of France, Louis XIV., April 26, 1649.

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre, to all who shall read these presents, health and salutation. Be it hereby known, that by the advice of the Queen Regent our highly honoured Lady and Mother, having taken and placed, as we now take and place by these presents, signed by our hand, under our protection and special safeguard, the most reverend Patriarch, and all the Prelates, ecclesiastical and secular, Maronite Christians, which inhabit particularly Mount Lebanon, we desire that they should experience the benefits thereof, on all occasions and under all circumstances; and to this end we command our faithful and beloved Sieur de la Hayerentelay, Counsellor in our councils and our Ambassador in the Levant, and all those who shall succeed him in that employment, to favour them jointly or separately, with all their care, good offices, advice,

and protection, as well at the Porte of our very dear and perfect friend the Grand Seigneur, as everywhere else, where it may be requisite; in such a manner that they be exposed to no ill treatment, but on the contrary may freely continue in, and exercise without molestation, all their spiritual functions. We further enjoin upon the Consuls and Vice-Consuls of the French nation established in the ports and roads of the Levant, or others hoisting the French standard present and to come, to favour with all the means in their power the aforesaid Patriarch, and all the aforesaid Maronite Christians of the aforesaid Mount Lebanon, and to embark in French vessels or others, such young men and all such other Maronite Christians, as shall desire to pass over into Christendom, whether for study or any other affairs, without taking or demanding from them anything but the permits which they shall be pleased to give them; treating them with all kindness and charity possible. Pray and request the Illustrious and Magnificent Seigneurs, Pashas, and officers of His Highness, to favour and assist the Sieur Archbishop of Tripoli and all the Maronite Prelates and Christians;

offering on your parts to do the like towards those who shall be recommended to you by them. Given at St. Germain en Laye this twenty-eighth day of April 1649, and of our reign the sixteenth.

(Signed) LOUIS,

the Queen-Regent, his mother, being present.

Loco ×

† Sigilli, et de Lomenic.

LETTER OF PROTECTION

Granted to the Most Reverend Patriarch of Antioch, and to the Maronite Nation, by the Emperor and Most Christian King, Louis XV., 12th April 1737.

LOUIS, by the grace of God, Emperor, and Most Christian King of France and Navarre, to all who shall read these presents—salutation. The Patriarch of Antioch, and the Maronite Christians established in Mount Lebanon, have represented to us, that for an indefinite period, their nation has been under the protection of the Emperors and Kings of France, our glorious predecessors, of

which they have experienced the beneficial effects on various occasions; and they have most humbly petitioned us to be pleased to grant these our letters of protection and safeguard, after the example of the late King, our most honoured King and great-grandfather, who granted them the like, on the twenty-eighth of April, 1649. And inasmuch as we are desirous on our parts to treat favourably the petitioners, for these causes and other good considerations to the same purpose; we declare that we have taken and placed them, as by these presents, signed by our hand, we take and place them, under our protection and safeguard. We desire that they may feel the effects thereof, under all circumstances: and to this end, we command our faithful and well-beloved Counsellors in our Councils, our Ambassadors at Constantinople, Consuls, and Vice-Consuls of the French nation, established in the ports and roadsteads of the Levant, present and to come, to favour with their care, offices, and protection, the said Sieur Patriarch of Antioch, and all the said Maronite Christians of the Lebanon, whenever need may be, to the end that they may experience no ill treatment, and that they may

on the contrary, continue freely their spiritual exercises and functions: for such is our good will and pleasure. Pray and request the great Emperor of the Mussulmen, our most dear and perfect friend, and the Illustrious Pashas, and other officers of His Highness, to favour and assist with their protection the said Patriarch of Antioch, and all the said Maronite Christians, offering to do the same for all those who shall be recommended to us, on their parts. In witness of which we have placed our seal to these presents. Given in our Imperial Chateau of Versailles, the twelfth day of April, in the year of grace, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven, and of our reign the twenty-second.

(Signed) LOUIS.

In the Capitulations between the French Government and the Porte, Sultan Mohammed IV. gives to Louis XIV. the title of Protector of the Christians of Mount Lebanon, a title which however had already been conceded to Henry IV. by Soliman II.

These documents are probably only known to

the heads of the Maronite Church; but they on their parts take very good care that their import shall be fully understood, throughout the entire population of the Maronites, most of whom, as has been already observed, undisguisedly give utterance to the most "tender sentiments of fraternity" towards their French co-religionists, and look forward with ardent expectation to the advent of another Godfrey de Bouillon, to deliver them from the Turks, and make them a great and independent nation.

In the last civil war between them and the Druses, the Maronites on one occasion unfurled a tri-coloured flag, to indicate their alliance with France, and thus give a greater importance to their cause. Their numbers amount to about 200,000 souls, out of which 30,000 are capable of bearing arms; but as far as regards real effective fighting, this number may safely be reduced to half that figure. Indeed, in stating that the Maronites could muster 10,000 good warriors, the estimate rather exceeds than falls below the reality. The highland districts alone produce brave men. In the lower provinces they are cowardly and

effeminate; and it is for this reason that the Druses, though so vastly inferior in point of numbers, are almost their equals in hostile operations.

The Druses in the Lebanon* amount to barely 14,000 males, but they can muster 6,000 as sturdy warriors as ever took the field, with the advantage of union, and that species of discipline which consists in ready and prompt obedience to the orders of their Sheiks.

The Maronites are in the enjoyment of the most complete religious liberty. The sound of bells so grateful to the Christian ear may be heard at all hours throughout the mountain ranges, and resounding through their fertile valleys. They are exempt from the conscription. No Turkish authorities, whether civil or military, ever intrude into their villages, and the only way in which the existence of a Turkish Government is felt at all is through the taxes, which again are distributed and raised amongst them, by their own local functionaries.

Not that this is any safeguard from oppression

* The Druses in Syria amount to about 60,000 souls.

to the lower orders, (indeed it is by their own chiefs that they suffer most in the way of exaction), but it shows, together with all the other circumstances above mentioned, that in the Lebanon at least, there exists a community of Christians in the very heart of the Turkish Empire, who are virtually as free and independent as any state in Christendom.

CHAPTER IX.

To relate minutely the succession of events which followed the retirement of the Emir Milheim to Beyrout, in the year 1756, would be tedious and unprofitable. The causes which had induced that able and politic prince, to abandon the cares of government after a vigorous and successful administration of nearly thirty years' duration, continued to embarrass, only with increased virulence, all the proceedings of the Emirs on whom had devolved the much-coveted but arduous task, of ruling the Lebanon.

The restless spirit of intrigue and rival animosity which had begun to animate the leading families of the Druses, speedily overthrew the feeble resistance presented by these inexperienced

possessors of divided power; and shortly after the death of the Emir Milheim, in the year 1760, the Emirs Munsoor and Achmet were seen respectively heading in open warfare, the rival Druse factions of Jumblatt and Yesbeck. The mosque of the Emir Minder Tnooh, in Beyrout, received the remains of the deceased prince. By will he appointed the Maronite Sheik Saad il Houri to be the guardian of his children, thus tacitly sanctioning the recent conversions which had occurred in his family, and hoping by this means to secure to their interests some of the most influential chiefs of the Maronites.

The degrading position of the Shehaabs at Deir el Kammar, under the tutelage of the Druse feudatories, had aroused the resentment of the Emir Kassim ibn Omar, father of the celebrated Emir Bechir Shehaab; and by a series of desultory expeditions into the Druse districts, he at length extorted from his relatives the cession of the town and district of Ghazir, as an independent appanage. The Emir Milheim, glad to encourage a spirit of enterprise which promised to vindicate the honour of his family, had, shortly before he died, urged

the Emir Kassim to go in person to Constantinople and demand the government of the Mountain. This step, which the latter readily adopted, was partly crowned with success, and the adventurous prince returned with a Firman, investing him with that of the Shoof, the stronghold of the Druses.

His relatives at Deir el Kammar had no great difficulty in getting the Druse Sheiks to support them in their resistance to the Imperial mandate, and sending a bribe of 500*l.* to the Pasha of Sidon, they succeeded in persuading that Turkish authority to take upon himself the responsibility of annulling the appointment.

The princes of the House of Shehaab, at this period, formed so many rallying points for the various and conflicting designs which agitated the Mountain factions. That ancient family had been acknowledged by the Porte as the reigning dynasty in Mount Lebanon, even, as has been observed, with the principle of hereditary succession to power. The Druse Sheiks accordingly, invariably endeavoured to secure a member of this family to their interests, in all their aspirations after wealth and influence. Thus the name of Shehaab, under the

outward pretence of loyalty, became a cloak to the worst and most selfish designs; and each successive candidate for the Pelisse of honour, was brought forward by his partizans and recommended to the Turkish authorities, as possessing fitter attributes for the functions of government than the one in actual possession.

To the latter, nothing could be more grateful than such a race for distinction and emolument amongst chiefs who, if united, might have set them at defiance; and the whims and fancies of all parties were immediately gratified, in proportion to their power of paying for their partialities. The Turkish Pashas being armed with unlimited power to pillage, the fines they imposed on arbitrary leases of power formed one of the principal items in their revenues.

It is not surprising, therefore, that no great length of time elapsed after the death of the Emir Milheim, before communications were opened between Sheik Ali Jumblatt and Sheik Saad il Houri, on behalf of the young princes whom the latter had under his guardianship. Motives of gratitude as well as of ambition, may be supposed

to have influenced the overtures of the Druse chieftain; for it will be remembered, that the House of Jumblatt owed its good fortune to the Emir Heider Shehaab.* The residence of the minors, which had been for some time past at Shamoon, was privately transferred to Muctara, the family seat of the Jumblatts; and here those schemes were concocted which finally led to the resumption by the Emir Yousuf, eldest son of the Emir Milheim, of that power which his father had voluntarily laid down.

This young prince was in his seventeenth year, and fully alive to the importance of the career which was thus opened up before him. Advised to become a candidate for place, he presented himself before the Pasha of Tripoli. His guardian, Saad il Houri, accompanied him, and with the most flattering prospects of increased revenues, should he be appointed Minister of Finance to the young prince, gained the Pasha over entirely to his views. The government of the provinces of Djebail, Batroon, and Kesrouan were at once conferred upon him.

* See vol. i. chap. x. p. 209.

The effects of his new faith were now manifest. The Maronites thronged to welcome a Governor whom they could recognise as a co-religionist. His popularity rapidly increased, and supported as he was by the powerful Druse clans of the Jumblatts and Nekads, his position every day assumed an aspect of greater importance. Determined to become conspicuous, and anxious to ingratiate himself with his Turkish masters, he attacked the Metualis inhabiting the higher parts of the districts over which he had been placed, and in the year 1763, with the assistance of large reinforcements of Druses, succeeded in chastising those audacious marauders.

The Pasha of Sidon was at the same time engaged with the Metualis, in the mountains lying between that town and Acre. The Emir Yousuf came in person to his aid, and successfully assisted at the siege of their stronghold of Sanoor. Whatever might have been the private sentiments of the Emir Mansoor on seeing the activity of his nephew, displayed only in causes which could not but augment his favour with the ruling Turkish authorities, and however his fears may have

prompted him to excite, by means of secret emissaries, their jealousy against his rising pretensions, it is certain that a sense of his own inferiority, together probably with feelings of reluctance, at his advanced period of life, to enter into a harassing conflict for political ascendency, the results of which, with such a competitor must have been self-evident, induced him to send messengers to the Emir Yousuf, requesting him to attend at a general meeting, which he was about to convene, at the source of the Barook.

After a slight affectation of reluctance to embrace the offer which he knew the summons implied, the young Emir gave his consent; and, in the month of May, 1770, the Emir Munsoor, in presence of the leading chiefs of the Mountain, resigned his power to his nephew the Emir Yousuf Shehaab, and exhorted all present to obey him as their lawful liege. The nomination was at once sanctioned by all parties, and news of the event transmitted to the Pasha of Sidon, together with a bag containing 300*l*., the arrears of taxes due by the late Governor. A speedy confirmation was for once accorded to the public choice, and, at the

age of twenty-four, the Emir Yousuf entered Deir el Kammar, in undisputed possession of rule and authority over the whole range of mountain from Sidon to Tripoli.

For the moment, the Turkish authorities were glad to see some degree of union established amongst the feudal parties, which periodically disturbed the peace and repose of the Lebanon, for the assistance of the combined forces of the Druses and the Maronites was absolutely necessary, to enable them to put down the Metualis, who now openly spurned their commands, and levied contributions on all within their reach.

CHAPTER X.

THE precise period at which the Metualis began to locate in the mountain ranges, on the north and south of the Lebanon range, cannot be exactly stated. According to tradition, they were originally inhabitants of the kingdom of Bokhara, who fled into Syria, after having been engaged in some unsuccessful rebellion against their sovereign. Part of them, under a chief of the name of Harfoosh, found an asylum in Belad Hermul, to the north of Baalbec, while another portion, under a leader of the name of Hamada, pursued their way into the Lebanon, and found refuge amongst the Maronites.

It is, perhaps, needless to state, that they are, as their name in some degree indicates, Mohammedans of the sect of Ali, called by their opponents

Schiis, or Sectarians, whose distinguishing principle is well known to have been, that Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, was his legitimate heir and successor, to the exclusion of those chiefs who eventually assumed the direction of affairs after the Prophet's death. They curse Omar and Moawia, as rebels and usurpers, and revere Ali and Hosein as saints and martyrs. They consequently look upon the Turks with distrust and aversion, and their submission to the Sultan is to this day forced and hypocritical.

A further allusion to the peculiar tenets and practices which distinguish them from the Sunnis, or followers of Omar, is not necessary at present. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, their position in the northern parts of the Lebanon had already begun to be pretty well defined, and accordingly, about that period, they are to be heard of as possessing very extensive Macaatas and provincial jurisdiction, throughout the districts of Djebail and Batroon, under the patronage and favour of the Emirs of the House of Asaff and Safa, whose history has already been related in the preceding pages.

The descendants of Hamada, known as the House of Hamadi, were intrusted with various governments in the north of the Mountain, and the Maronites found themselves ultimately obliged to submit to such chiefs of that family, as were imposed upon them by their Mohammedan rulers. In fact, they became the instruments of that tyranny and oppression which forced the Maronites, as stated in a previous part of this history, to seek the protection of the House of Maan. There was scarcely a district in the northern part of the Lebanon, which they were not deputed to govern; and, for a considerable time, the Hamady Sheiks divided the plunder of Zowiey, Akoora, Djebail, Batroon, Eftooah, Wady Alma, and Meneytri, between them. In the latter, which is a highland district, they built a strong castle, the ruins of which may be seen to this day. The Metualis contrived likewise to obtain footing in the mountain above Sidon and Tyre, and there also gradually obtained possessions and acquired importance.

So long as these robbers consented to transmit a certain portion of their booty, in the shape of

miri and taxes, to the Turkish Pashas who dwelt at Sidon, Tripoli, and Damascus, their proceedings were little interfered with, and the cries and exclamations of an impoverished people were either unheard or unheeded. When, however, they refused to disgorge, or made uncertain and precarious remittances, those functionaries, in order to regain their authority, found it convenient to discover that they had subjects whose lives and properties it was their duty to protect; and thus it has been seen, that both Maronites and Druses were especially armed to check the inroads and ravages of the Metualis, in their several departments.

The Emir Yousuf Shehaab had been the successful champion of the Pashas, in the North. In the South, these functionaries were of themselves helpless, and vainly protested against insults and contumely which they were wholly unable to punish. Yet their necessities were great, and their avarice insatiable. In their blind and unprincipled cupidity, they submitted to the ignominious alternative of farming the revenues of the land occupied by the Metualis, to an open rebel. This was the celebrated Sheik Daher, son of Omar.

The career of this man, who was originally a Sheik of one of the wandering Arab tribes which to this day frequent the marshy plains between the Lakes Houlé and Tiberias, to profit by their abundant pastures, is eminently calculated to mark the utter prostration and corruption which signalized the Turkish Government in Syria, in the eighteenth century.

Incessantly plied with demands for tribute from the Pasha of Damascus, he determined to place himself in a situation, where he could with some chance of success carry out those plans of open resistance, which he saw were the only means of averting his tribe from ruin. As a first step he possessed himself of the neighbouring town of Tiberias, and repaired its defences. He also secured the strong position of Safet, and contrived to get the surrounding population engaged in his interests. He was supported in his operations by sons equally hardy and adventurous as himself. The execution of one of his brothers in Damascus, where he had been treacherously seized by the Pasha's orders, confirmed and accelerated his resolution; and in 1736 he raised the standard of revolt.

An abortive attempt of Soliman il Aadm, the Pasha of Damascus to subdue him, only encouraged him in his designs. Learning that warlike stores were being landed in the harbour of Kaifa, for the evident purpose of being employed against himself, he boldly made a descent on the coast in that direction, and seized the town of Acre, which was however at that time a paltry village without walls. The Aga who commanded fled to Sidon to relate his misfortunes, but was immediately followed by a messenger, bearing a letter from Sheik Daher, in which, after excusing himself for what had passed, he guaranteed to the Pasha a fixed tribute, to be regularly transmitted to him without cost or trouble, for the entire district under his sway. A handsome bribe supported this timely proposition, and the result of communications with Constantinople upon the subject which shortly ensued, was the confirmation of Sheik Daher as governor of all the country he had so audaciously subdued and appropriated.

The daring and clever Arab was now a Pasha in everything but the name. His ideas and plans extended with his opportunities. The principles

and advantages of barter and commerce have been at all times fully appreciated by the Arabs, and it required no great persuasion on the part of some Europeans who used to frequent the port of Kaifa, to induce Daher to turn his attention towards the immense advantages which would accrue to him, by establishing in Acre, a mart for the purchase and exchange of articles of merchandise. He at once determined on making it his principal residence; and in the year 1750, under pretext of building a house, he erected on the northern point towards the sea, a strong substantial edifice, which he provided with cannon bought from a Maltese pirate. He then built towers for the defence of the harbour, and enclosed the town by a wall, ridiculous as a fortification, but sufficient to protect him against any sudden attack.

It now became his interest, to establish a feeling of security amongst the peasantry and villagers in the adjacent mountains. His influence amongst the wandering Arab tribes, who had long been accustomed to levy the greatest exactions in those parts, enabled him to make them desist from proceedings so arbitrary and injurious. With some

of them he had formed family alliances; and others, such as the Anazi and the Beni Sukkur, who range about from the Dead Sea to Damascus, soon learnt to value bazaars, where they found various articles of European manufacture suited to their tastes and wants, and whither they could come without danger of being squeezed for money, imprisoned, or bastinadoed. The town of Acre soon became the seat of a little dominion which extended its influence on all sides.

Emboldened by Daher's alliance and protection, the Bedouin Arabs who hover about the southern plains of Syria, were yearly becoming more audacious in their demeanour towards their Turkish rulers, and at last in the year 1757, fell upon, dispersed, and plundered the Caravan of Mecca, consisting of 60,000 pilgrims. The booty they seized was immense, and Acre formed a ready emporium for the sale and disposal of the various costly articles which it comprised.

Maltese corsairs had for several years scoured the Mediterranean, and particularly infested the coasts of Syria. They found refuge in the harbour of Acre, where they unloaded their spoils,

and sold the prizes they had taken. Such proceedings could not of course be carried on without the knowledge of the Sultan, and accordingly, the strongest complaints and remonstrances were sent upon the subject from Constantinople to the Pasha of Sidon. Sheik Daher, on this being reported to him, determined to correspond directly with the Grand Vizier, to whom he forwarded the white banner of the Prophet, taken by the Arabs in their attack on the Caravan.

To prove that he in no way favoured the lawless descents of the Maltese pirates, he armed two galliots and sent them to sea, with ostensible orders to drive them off. But, in reality, these galliots committed no hostilities against the Maltese, and served, on the contrary, to correspond with them, remote from all witnesses. In his zeal to defend the road of Kaifa, he represented that the enemy might take shelter there in spite of him; and requested leave to build a fort for its protection, and provide it with cannon, at the expense of the Sultan. So laudable a proposition was at once complied with; but Daher very soon contrived to have the fort adjudged useless, demo-

lished it, and transported the brass cannon thence to Acre.

Unable to put him down, the Porte, in accordance with its well-known principle of acting under such circumstances, determined to affect compliance with all his wishes, and to sanction his encroachments on the power and authority of its own functionaries. Daher, on the other hand, was not sparing of the only means which he knew would be effective towards conciliating the offended dignity of his rulers, and by large and repeated bribes, obtained at last from the Porte itself, a recognition of his claims to the rank and privileges of a provincial governor. Till that time he had only held his domains under the title of renter, and by annual lease, paying the usual fine to the Pasha of Sidon on his yearly investiture.

His vanity could no longer submit to this restriction, and as he possessed all the essentials of power, he aspired to its titles; nay, perhaps he thought them necessary, more effectually to establish his authority over his children and his subjects. About the year 1768, therefore, he solicited a permanent investiture of his government for

himself and his successor, and demanded to be proclaimed, *Sheik of Acre, Prince of Princes, Governor of Nazareth, Tiberias, and Safet, and Sheik of all Galilee.* The Porte conceded everything to fear and money, approved and confirmed all his acts to the utmost of his desires; but in the mean time proceeded to take such measures as might hereafter, in the chapter of accidents, on which it always calculates, vindicate, and perhaps regain its lawful supremacy.

Such is a brief sketch of the position of Sheik Daher, the son of Omar, about the time when the Pasha of Sidon, by farming out to him the revenues of the Metuali districts, enabled him to extend his machinations in that direction, and to add another element to his already formidable power and influence. The appointment of Osman Pasha to the Governor-generalship of Syria and Palestine, with his sons in the Pashalics of Tripoli and Sidon, seemed to afford a prospect of success to the Sultan's plans, by giving promise of united councils and zealous combinations. A severe reverse, however, attended Osman Pasha's first operations against Daher, near Naplouse; and this check

served as a pretext for that Turkish functionary to display all the rancour and rapacity of his race.

Under pretence of recruiting his finances for the purpose of carrying on his measures, he levied contributions on all the towns, villages, and individuals, within his reach. Whoever was suspected of having money was summoned, bastinadoed, and robbed. The slightest resistance, or even remonstrance, was suppressed by the most odious cruelties. The people began to murmur on every side, and Palestine, emboldened by the vicinity of Egypt, now in a state of rebellion, threatened to call in a foreign protector. Under these circumstances Ali Bey, the conqueror of Mecca and the Said, turned his prospects of aggrandizement towards Syria. The alliance of Daher, the war with the Russians which now occupied the Turks, and the discontents of the people, all conspired to favour his ambition.

He accordingly published a manifesto in 1770, in which he declared, that God having bestowed a signal benediction on his arms, he thought himself bound in duty to make use of them for the relief

of the oppressed, and to put down the tyranny of Osman, in Syria. The brutality, avarice, and incompetence of the Sultan's governors, had thus only increased the disaffection they were commissioned to disarm, and to strengthen the opportunities of the Chief they were sent to put down. Mohammed Bey, surnamed *Aboudehab*, or father of gold,* a Lieutenant of Ali Bey, arrived in Palestine with a large army, in the month of Feb., 1771, and marched directly upon Acre, where he was joined by considerable bodies of the mountain peasantry. The Metualis, now in the interest of Daher, flocked to the Egyptian standard.

In the month of April, after a successful battle under its walls, in which the Turkish troops were entirely defeated, Mohammed Bey entered Damascus in triumph; but to the surprise of all, as he was on the point of taking possession of the castle, he suddenly gave orders for the evacuation of the city, and again took the road to Cairo. The Turks had bribed him to become a traitor. Having thus got rid of so formidable an enemy, Osman Pasha, imagining that Daher, chagrined by the

* So named from the splendour of his dress and appointments.

unexpected news of the defection of his ally, would not be prepared for defence, formed the project of surprising him even in Acre.

He was encountered, however, on his road thither, by Ali, son of Daher, who, learning that he was encamped on the western bank of Lake Houlé, fell upon him with his mountaineers, routed his camp, and drove the Turks into the lake, where numbers perished in the waters and mud. The Pasha himself had the good fortune to escape, being saved by two negroes, who swam across with him on their shoulders. At the same juncture, and probably in execution of part of a joint plan against Daher, Derweesh, the son of Osman, had engaged the Druses under Sheik Ali Jumblatt to garrison the town of Sidon, while the Emir Yousuf Shehaab, advancing into the districts of the Metualis, with 25,000 men, laid waste all before him with fire and sword.

Daher, with a skill and foresight which does him infinite credit, disregarding, for the moment, the ruinous inroads of the enemy in the mountain, gathered the best of his forces, and attacked Sidon. The Druses in the immediate vicinity were soon

dispersed, and their flight communicated a panic to the garrison. Ali Jumblatt despairing of defending the town, evacuated it without delay. The Metualis finding it without defence, entered and plundered it. At length their Chiefs put an end to the pillage, and taking possession of Sidon in the name of Daher, appointed Degnizla, a native of Barbary, renowned for his bravery, to be its Mutsellim, or Governor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Porte, terrified at the defeats it had met with, both from the Russians and its rebellious subjects, now offered to treat with Daher on very advantageous conditions. To induce him to accede to its proposals, it removed the Pashas of Damascus, Sidon, and Tripoli, disavowed their conduct, and solicited a reconciliation with him. Daher, now in his eighty-sixth year, was willing to come to an accommodation so flattering to his pride and vanity, that he might terminate his days in peace; but he was diverted from his intention by his Minister of Finance, a man called Ibrahim Saaba.

This adventurer, a Greek Christian, had contrived, with that tact and cunning peculiar to his class, to obtain a complete ascendancy over his

master; and under cover of his name and authority, to indulge in the exercise of the most unblushing peculation. The Sheik, on his part, could not but applaud the industry and ability of an employé, who always contrived to have funds ready for every emergency; and his constant occupations in the field prevented him, unfortunately, from scrutinizing too closely the nature of a revenue which was really, too often, without his knowledge or consent, recruited from the most iniquitous sources.

Saaba, it seems, had reasons for expecting that Ali Bey would, in the ensuing spring, proceed in person to the conquest of Syria, and was led, moreover, to expect that this Mameluke would cede a considerable portion of that country to Daher. In the future aggrandisement of his master's power, he saw the advancement of his own private fortune, and the means of adding fresh treasures to those already amassed by his insatiable avarice. Seduced by the brilliant prospect laid before him, Daher rejected the propositions of the Porte, and prepared to carry on the war with redoubled activity.

A sudden revolution, however, in Egypt, successfully conducted by Mohammed Bey, whose sudden retreat from Damascus has already been related, against his patron Ali Bey, forced the latter to fly; and in 1772 he appeared at Acre, not as a conqueror, but as a fugitive and suppliant. News arrived, almost at the same time, that the Turkish troops, under the command of seven Pashas, and in concert with the Druses, under the Emir Yousuf Shehaab, and Sheik Ali Jumblatt, were besieging Sidon. Nothing dispirited by this sudden change of affairs, Daher, accompanied by Ali Bey and the Mameluke cavalry, who had escorted him to Acre, to the amount of 800, proceeded at once to encounter his enemies.

In the road of Kaifa were some Russian vessels, which, profiting by the revolt of Daher, were taking in provisions: the Sheik negotiated with them, and for a present of six hundred purses, engaged them to second his operations by sea. It is curious to see the Russians, eighty years ago, taking part in the affairs of Syria, and as a maritime power assisting the mountaineers, to overthrow the Sultan's authority. Daher's army at this time, might

consist of five or six thousand Safetian and Metuali cavalry, eight hundred of Ali Bey's Mamelukes, and about one thousand Barbary infantry.

The Turks, on the contrary, united with the Druses, amounted to ten thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand peasants, who, as soon as they received intelligence of the approach of the hostile forces, raised the siege, and retreated to the north of Sidon, not intending flight, but to wait for Daher and give him battle.

The Turkish army, extending from the sea to the foot of the mountains, were drawn up in platoons, nearly in the same line. A body of Druses, headed by their Ockals on foot, were posted near the sea-shore, behind some wild pear hedges, and in trenches they had dug to prevent a sally from the town, while the cavalry occupied the plain in no little confusion. Towards the centre, and advanced a little in front, were eight pieces of cannon, twelve and twenty-four pounders. At the foot of the mountains, and on their declivity, was placed the main body of the Druses, armed with muskets, without entrenchments, and without cannon.

On the side of Daher, the Metualis and the Safetians ranged themselves, so as to present the greatest front possible, and endeavoured to occupy as much of the plain as the Turks. The right wing, commanded by Naseef, a Metuali chief, consisted of the Metualis and the thousand Barbary infantry, intended to oppose the peasant Druses. The other, led on by Ali Daher, was left without support against the Druses, near the sea-shore; but he relied on the Russian boats and vessels, which, keeping close in with the shore, advanced in a line parallel to the army. In the centre were the eight hundred Mamelukes, and behind them Ali Bey, with the aged Daher, who still, at times, animated his people, both by his words and his example.

The action was begun by the Russian vessels. No sooner had they fired a few broadsides on the Druses, than the latter retreated in confusion. The squadron of cavalry now advancing nearly in a line, came within cannon-shot of the Turks. Instantly the Mamelukes, anxious to justify the general opinion of their bravery, galloped full speed towards the enemy. The gunners, intimidated by such intrepidity, and seeing themselves

on foot, between two lines of cavalry, unsupported either by redoubts, or infantry, fired their pieces with precipitation, and took to flight. The Mamelukes, who suffered but little from this volley, rushed, in an instant, amidst the cannon, and charged the Turkish cavalry. They met but a feeble resistance, and in the confusion which ensued, every one, not knowing what to do, or what was passing round him, was more disposed to fly, than fight. The seven Pashas led the way, and immediately the flight became general.

The Druses, who were not engaged with goodwill on the side of the Turks, presently left the field, and retreated to their mountains. The allies, satisfied with their victory, would not risk a pursuit, in a country which became more difficult as they approached Beyrout. The Russian ships, however, to punish the Druses, proceeded to that town, which they bombarded, making, at the same time a descent, during which they burnt upwards of three hundred houses. This victory, which was achieved in the month of July, 1772, enabled Daher rapidly to retrace his steps towards the mountains of Naplouse, and the neighbourhood of

Jaffa, where some insurrectionary attempts, excited by Turkish emissaries, had already begun to give him trouble and uneasiness.

The Mountaineers were promptly put down, but Jaffa offered a vigorous resistance; and it was only at the expiration of an eight months' siege, that its inhabitants were forced by famine to capitulate. Notwithstanding the signal defeat which they had just sustained, and the defection of the Druses which shortly afterwards occurred, with the consent of the Emir Yousuf Shehaab, the Turkish Government confirmed Osman Pasha in his post at Damascus, and, indignant at the Egyptian domination, gave orders for a renewal of hostilities.

Ali Bey had, in the mean time, suddenly, and, as it proved, rashly, set out for Egypt, whither he had been recalled by letters from his friends, in which they informed him that the people were tired of his ungrateful slave, and that nothing but his presence was wanting to expel him. The Russians had promised him a reinforcement of six hundred men, if he would only delay his departure a few days; and Daher had earnestly pressed him to stay until this auxiliary force should arrive, and until

more mature preparations were made, but Ali became impatient.

His secretary, a Copt, who exercised the most complete influence over him, had assured him that the hour of his return was come, that the aspect of the stars was propitious, and that the downfall of Mohammed was certain. Ali, who believed firmly in astrology, and who put the greatest faith in his Copt, because he believed his predictions had been often verified, could no longer endure delay, and the news he had received from Cairo completed his impatience. He determined, therefore, to set out immediately; and, without giving the Russians time to arrive, departed with his Mamelukes, and 1500 Safetians commanded by Osman, the son of Daher.

But he was ignorant that the letters from Cairo were a stratagem of Mohammed's, and that this Bey had extorted them by force, in order to deceive and lead him into the snare he was preparing. In fact, no sooner had Ali advanced into the Desert which separates Gaza from Egypt, than he fell in, near Salakia, with a chosen body of 1000 Mamelukes, who were lying in ambush waiting his arrival.

This corps was commanded by young Mourad Bey, the same who afterwards commanded the Mamelukes against the French in Egypt, and who, being enamoured of the wife of Ali Bey, had obtained a promise of her from Mohammed, in case he should bring him the head of that illustrious unfortunate.

Scarcely did Mourad perceive the dust which announced the approach of his enemies, than he rushed upon them with his Mamelukes, and threw them into confusion. To crown his good fortune, he met with Ali in the crowd, attacked and wounded him in the forehead with his sabre, made him prisoner, and conducted him to Mohammed. The latter, who was encamped two leagues in the rear, received his former master with that exaggerated respect which is so customary with the Turks, and that sensibility which perfidy knows so well how to feign. He provided a magnificent tent for him, ordered him to be attended on with the greatest care, and styled himself repeatedly "his slave, who licked the dust of his feet." On the third day, however, this parade of politeness terminated in the death of Ali Bey, who perished, according to

some, of his wounds, or, as others report, by poison. The probability of both these accounts is so equal, that it is impossible to decide between them.

Such a reverse could not have occurred at a period more critical for Daher's interests, and he was the more affected at this misfortune, as instead of an useful ally powerful in resources, he acquired an enemy formidable from his hatred and activity. Nothing daunted, however, and certainly not expecting the net of intrigue and perfidy which the Turkish Government was weaving around him, he prepared gallantly to bear up against his dangers, which were to all appearance sufficiently menacing. Osman Pasha had assembled under his orders six Pashas, whose forces he led through the valley of the Bekaa, to the village of Zachlé, with the intention of penetrating into the Lebanon.

The strength of his army, and the rapidity of its march, spread consternation on every side, and the Emir Yousuf, perplexed and irresolute, already repented his alliance with Daher; but this brave chief, always solicitous for the safety of his allies, had taken care to provide for their defence. The Turks had hardly been encamped six days at the

foot of the Mountains, before they learnt that Ali, the son of Daher, was approaching to give them battle. In vain were they told, that the enemy had but 500 horse, while their own force was upwards of 5000 strong; the very name of Ali Daher so terrified them, that the whole Turkish army fled in one night, and left their camp full of baggage and ammunition to the inhabitants of Zachlé.

CHAPTER XII.

After this success, it might be supposed Daher would have allowed himself time to breathe, and have turned his attention to preparations for his defence, which was becoming daily more necessary; but fortune had determined he should no longer enjoy any repose. For several years past, domestic troubles had accompanied foreign wars; and it was only by means of the latter he had been able to appease the former. His children—who were themselves old men—were wearied of waiting so long for their inheritance; and, besides this constant disposition to revolt, had real grievances to complain of, which, by giving too much reason for their discontent, rendered them the more dangerous.

For several years, Ibrahim Saaba, the Secretary already alluded to, had engrossed all his confidence, which he shamefully abused, to gratify his own avarice. He dared not openly exercise the tyranny of the Turks, but he neglected no means, however unjust, by which he could amass money. He monopolised every article of commerce; he alone had the sale of cotton, corn, and other articles of exportation, and he alone purchased clothes, indigo, sugars, and other merchandise. His avarice had frequently invaded the supposed privileges, and even the real rights of the Sheiks: they did not pardon him this abuse of power, and every day furnishing fresh subjects of complaint, was productive of new disturbances.

Daher,—whose understanding began to be impaired by his extreme old age, did not adopt measures calculated to appease them. He called his children rebels, and ungrateful, and imagined he had no faithful and disinterested servant but Ibrahim Saaba. This infatuation served only to destroy all respect for his person, and to inflame and justify their discontents. The unhappy effects of this conduct at length displayed themselves in

1774. Since the death of Ali Bey, Ibrahim Saaba, finding he had more to fear than hope, abated something of his haughtiness. He no longer saw the same certainty of amassing money, by making war. His allies, the Russians, in whom all his confidence was placed, began themselves to talk of peace, and these motives determined him to induce Daher to seek an accommodation with the Turkish Government.

The Porte desired nothing better than to favour the advances of one who had hitherto set it at defiance, especially as at that very moment it was successfully completing a plan in concert with Mohammed Bey, in Cairo, against its rebellious subject, which would enable it at length to vindicate its long-outraged dignity. Professing a complete oblivion of all past differences, it offered to negotiate through a confidential agent whom it maintained at Acre, and who was commissioned to regulate the terms of a treaty. It was agreed that Daher and his sons should lay down their arms, but retain the government of the country, by receiving the tails, which are the symbols of this authority. But it was likewise stipulated, that Sidon should be re-

stored, and the Sheik pay the Miri, as he had done formerly.

These conditions were extremely dissatisfactory to the sons of Daher; and the more so, because they were contracted without their participation. They deemed it disgraceful again to become tributaries; and were still more offended that the Porte had granted to none of them the title given to their father. They, therefore, all revolted. Ali repaired to Palestine, and took up his quarters at Hebron; Ahmed and Said retired to Naplouse; Othman joined the Arabs, Beni Sukkur; and the remainder of the year passed in these dissensions.

Such was the situation of affairs, when, in the beginning of 1775, Mohammed Bey appeared in Palestine with all the forces he was able to collect. Gaza, destitute of ammunition, did not venture to resist. Jaffa, proud of the part she had acted in former disputes, had more courage. The inhabitants took arms, and their resistance to the besiegers had nearly disappointed the vengeance of the Mameluke. But everything conspired to the destruction of Daher. The Druses dared not stir; the Metualis were discontented; Ibrahim Saaba sum-

moned assistance from every quarter, but he offered no money, and his solicitations had no effect. He had not even the prudence to send provisions to the besieged. They were compelled to surrender, and the road to Acre was laid open to the enemy.

As soon as the taking of Jaffa was known, Daher and Saaba fled and took refuge in the mountains of Safet. It would have been difficult to foresee the consequences of this revolution, but the unexpected death of Mohammed Bey rendered it of no effect. The Egyptians suddenly retraced their steps, and Daher lost no time in returning to Acre, which had thus unexpectedly been delivered. But the storm was by no means appeased. Daher soon learnt that a Turkish fleet, under the command of Hassan, the celebrated Captain Pasha, was laying siege to Sidon. He then discovered, too late, the perfidy of the Porte, which had lulled his vigilance by professions of friendship, while she was concerting with Mohammed Bey the means of his destruction. Degnizla, bombarded in Sidon, without hope of succour, was compelled to evacuate the town, and the Captain Pasha appeared shortly after before Acre.

At sight of the enemy, a consultation was held how to escape the danger, and this led to a quarrel which decided the fate of Daher. Saaba was for repelling force by force. His reasons were, that the Captain Pasha had but three large vessels; that he could neither make an attack by land, nor remain at anchor before the castle without danger; that there was a sufficient force of cavalry and Barbary infantry to hinder a descent; and that it was almost certain the Turks would relinquish the enterprise without attempting anything. In opposition to him, Degnizla declared for peace, because resistance could only prolong the war. He maintained it was unreasonable to expose the lives of so many brave men, when the same object might be effected by less valuable means, that is by money; that he was sufficiently acquainted with the avarice of the Captain Pasha, to engage he would suffer himself to be corrupted, and was certain not only that he could procure his departure, but even make him a friend, for the sum of two thousand purses.

This was precisely what Saaba dreaded; he therefore exclaimed against the proposition, pro-

testing there was not a farthing in the treasury. Daher supported his assertion. "The Sheik is in the right," replied Degnizla; "his servants have long known that his generosity does not suffer his money to stagnate in his coffers; but has he no claim on their assistance in case of necessity? can it be believed that we cannot raise amongst us the sum of two thousand purses?" At these words Saaba, interrupting him, exclaimed, that "as for himself, no man could be poorer." "Say baser," resumed Degnizla, transported with rage. "Who is ignorant that for the last fourteen years you have been heaping up enormous treasures; that you have monopolised all the trade of the country; that you sell all the lands and keep back the payments that are due; that in the war of Mohammed Bey you plundered the whole territory of Gaza, carried away all the corn, and left the inhabitants of Jaffa without the necessaries of life?"

He was proceeding in this strain when the Sheik, commanding silence, protested the innocence of his minister, and accused Degnizla of envy and treachery. Degnizla quitted the council abruptly,

and assembling his countrymen, the Mograbians or Barbary Arabs, who composed the chief strength of the place, forbade them to fire upon the Captain Pasha. Daher, however, determined to stand the attack, made every necessary preparation, and the next day Hassan approaching the castle, began the cannonade. Daher answered with the few pieces with him, but in spite of his reiterated orders, those on other parts of the walls were not fired.

Finding himself betrayed, he mounted his horse, and leaving the town by the gate which opens towards the gardens on the north, attempted to gain the country, but while he was passing along the walls of these gardens, a Mograbian soldier shot him in the loins, and he fell dead to the ground. The Barbary Arabs instantly surrounding his body, cut off his head, which they carried to the Captain Pasha, who, according to the odious custom of the Turks, loaded it with insults, and had it pickled, in order to carry it to Constantinople as a present to the Sultan, and a spectacle to the people. Such was the tragical end of a man, in many respects worthy of a better fate.

In military affairs no man possessed more courage, activity, coolness, or resources. In politics, the noble frankness of his mind was not diminished even by his ambition. He was fond only of brave and open measures, and heroically preferred the dangers of the field to the wily intrigues of the cabinet; nor was it till he had taken Saaba for his minister, that his conduct was blemished with a sort of duplicity which that Christian called, prudence. The reputation of his justice had established throughout his states a security unknown in Turkey. Differences in religion occasioned no disputes. He possessed the toleration, or perhaps the indifference, of the Bedouin Arabs.

He had also preserved the simplicity of their customs and manners. His table was not different from that of a rich farmer. The utmost luxury of his dress never exceeded a few pelisses, and he never wore any trinkets. The greatest expense he incurred was in blood mares, for some of which he paid nearly eight hundred pounds. He loved women, but was so zealous of decency and decorum, as to order that every one taken in an act of gallantry, or offering insult to a woman, should be

put to death: he had, in short, attained the difficult medium between prodigality and avarice, and was at once generous and economical. Whence was it then that with such great qualities he did not further extend and more firmly establish his power?

To this question, a minute knowledge of his administration would furnish an easy answer, but the following may be looked upon as the three principal causes. First—his government wanted that internal good order and consistency in principle, without which all improvement must be slow and irregular. Secondly—the early concessions he made to his children introduced a multitude of disorders, which prevented the cultivation of agriculture, impoverished his finances, divided his forces, and prepared the downfall of himself and the independent state he had founded. A third and more efficacious cause than all the rest was, the avarice of Ibrahim Saaba.

This man, abusing the confidence of his master, and the weakness incident to age, exercised a rapacity which alienated from Daher, his children, servants and allies. His extortions indeed lay so heavily on the people, towards the end of his life,

as to render them indifferent whether or not they returned under the Turkish yoke. His passion for money was so sordid, that amidst the wealth he was amassing, he lived only on cheese and olives; and so great was his parsimony, that he frequently stopped at the shops of the poorest tradesmen, and partook of their frugal repast. He never wore any but dirty and ragged garments. To behold this meagre one-eyed wretch, one would have taken him for a beggar rather than the minister of a considerable state. By these vile practices he amassed upwards of half a million sterling, which ultimately became the spoil of the Turks.

No sooner was the death of Daher known in Acre, than the public indignation breaking out against Saaba, he was seized and given up to the Captain Pasha, to whom no present could have been more acceptable. The report of this man's treasures was general throughout Turkey; it had contributed to inflame the resentment and cupidity of Mohammed Bey, and was the principal motive of the measures of the Captain Pasha. The latter no sooner had him in his power, than he endeavoured to extort from him a declaration of the sums he possessed, and the place where they were

concealed, but Saaba firmly denied any such treasure existed.

In vain did the Pasha employ caresses, menaces, and blows; all were ineffectual; and it was by other indications that he at length discovered among the fathers of the Holy Land, and at the houses of two French merchants in Acre, several chests so large and so full of gold, that the biggest required eight men to carry it. With this gold were found, also, several trinkets, such as pearls and diamonds, and amongst other things, the Hanjar of Ali Bey, the handle of which, sparkling with diamonds, was valued at 8000*l.*

All this was conveyed to Constantinople, with Saaba, who was loaded with chains. The Turks, ferocious and insatiable, still hoping to discover new treasures, inflicted on him the most cruel tortures to force him to confession; but it is asserted, he invariably maintained the firmness of his character, and perished with the most dogged and unflinching resolution.*

* The author, in the preceding account of Daher, has made free use of that given by Volney, who was his contemporary in Syria. See Volney's *Travels in Syria*, vol. ii.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE check sustained by the Emir Yousuf Shehaab in conjunction with the Turkish forces, in the decisive battle near Sidon, July 1772, only served to stimulate the animosity which he had hitherto steadily displayed, in all his operations against the Metualis. Zealously supported by the Maronites, who burned to avenge themselves on their former aggressors, he forced them finally to abandon the provinces of Koora and Kesrouan. The intrigues and jealousies of a large faction in the Mountain, secretly excited by his uncle, the Emir Mansoor, still however rendered his power extremely precarious; and it was under these circumstances, that he had applied to the Pasha of Damascus to place a force in Beyrout, which might preserve

it from any sudden attempt on the part of his adversaries.

Allured by the countenance he had hitherto received from the Turkish authorities, and too young to have had any experience as to their real character, the Emir Yousuf was simple enough to conceive that he should be cordially supported by those whose battles he was faithfully fighting, and unsuspectingly confided that sea-port town to what he imagined would be their temporary keeping. The result of this impolitic application was not only detrimental to his own influence and position, inasmuch as it deprived his family of a possession which his ancestors had so long coveted, and had with so much difficulty obtained, but paved the way for the elevation of one, who was destined for many years to be the scourge and terror of the Lebanon.

The officer appointed to command the Turkish garrison in Beyrout, was one Achmet Aga, a native of Bosnia. It is said, that flying from his country at the age of sixteen, to escape the consequences of an attempt to violate his sister-in-law, he repaired to Constantinople, where, destitute of the means of procuring a subsistence, he sold

himself to the slave merchants, to be conveyed to Egypt, and on his arrival at Cairo was purchased by Ali Bey, who placed him among his Mamelukes. Achmet was not long in distinguishing himself by his courage and address. His patron employed him on several occasions in dangerous *coups de main*, and he became so expert and successful in the work of assassination, which had been especially assigned to him, as to acquire the name of Djezzar, which signifies *Butcher*.

With this claim to his friendship, he enjoyed the favour of Ali, until it was disturbed by an accident. The jealous Bey having proscribed one of his benefactors, called Saleh, commanded Djezzar to cut off his head. Either from humanity, or some secret friendship for the devoted victim, Djezzar hesitated, and even remonstrated against the order. But, learning the next day, that Mohammed Bey had executed the commission, and that Ali had spoken of him not very favourably, he thought himself a lost man; and, to avoid the fate of Saleh Bey, escaped unobserved, and reached Constantinople. He there solicited employment suited to his former rank, but meeting, as is usual

in Capitals, with a great number of rivals, he pursued another plan, and went to seek his fortune in Syria, as a private soldier.

Chance conducted him among the Druses, where he was hospitably entertained, even in the house of the Kehié of the Emir Yousuf Shehaab. From thence he repaired to Damascus, where he soon obtained the title of Aga, with a command of *five pair of colours*, that is to say, of fifty men. He was thus situated, when he was ordered to go to Beyrout, in the capacity above alluded to.

The nomination of Djezzar to this post, was in every way calculated to assure the Emir Yousuf, as he believed the man to be bound to his interests, by ties of gratitude for favours conferred on him in the time of adversity. Indeed the Emir had honourably refused a very large bribe, which had been offered to him by Mohammed Bey, to put him to death. What was his surprise and indignation, therefore, on being informed, that Djezzar had publicly declared, that Beyrout belonged to the Turks, to the exclusion of the rights of the Shehaabs. Receiving the remonstrance of the Emir with hypocritical humility, Djezzar invited

his former patron to a friendly interview at Mesaitbé, one of the suburbs of Beyrout, where, after offering various plausible pretexts in defence of the step he had taken, he promised, after a lapse of forty days, which he begged might be granted to him in order to arrange some affairs, to withdraw the Turkish soldiers, and give up the place. This interval he employed in securing and improving its defences, and when the term expired, declared resistance.

The Emir Yousuf, confounded at this perfidy, in vain demanded justice at Damascus. Djezzar was disowned, but not ordered to restore the town. Piqued at the refusal, the Emir complied at length with the general wish of the Druses, and entered into a treaty with Sheik Daher, concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with him, at the celebrated rendezvous of Ras-el-Ain, near Tyre. No sooner was Daher united with the Druses, than he laid siege to Beyrout by land, whilst two Russian frigates, whose services were purchased for six hundred purses, cannonaded it by sea. Djezzar, after sustaining a siege of four months, was compelled to submit to force, and surrendered himself prisoner.

Sheik Daher, charmed with his courage, and flattered with the preference he had given him in the surrender, conducted him to Acre, and shewed him every mark of kindness. He even ventured to trust him with a small expedition into Palestine; but Djezzar, on approaching Jerusalem, went over to the Turks, and returned to Damascus. The war of Mohammed Bey, adverted to in the preceding pages, breaking out, Djezzar got himself attached to the Captain Pasha, and gained his confidence. He accompanied him to the siege of Acre, and that Admiral having destroyed Daher, and finding no person more proper than Djezzar, to accomplish the designs of the Porte in Syria, named him *Pasha of Acre and Sidon*, in the year 1778, and committed to him the care of completing the destruction of the rebels.

Faithful to his instructions, Djezzar alternately attacked them by stratagem and force, and so far succeeded, as to induce Daher's sons, Othman, Said, and Achmet, to deliver themselves into his hands. Ali, the eldest, alone refused, and him they wished for most. In the following year (1779), however, he was besieged by the Captain

Pasha, in concert with Djezzar, in Deir Hanna, a stronghold about a day's journey from Acre, but he escaped them. To free themselves from their fears, they employed a stratagem worthy of their character. They suborned some Barbary Arabs, who, pretending to have been dismissed from Damascus, came into the country where Ali was encamped.

After relating their history to his attendants, they applied to the hospitality of the Sheik. Ali received them as became an Arab, and a brave man; but these wretches falling on him in the night massacred him, and hastened to demand their reward, though they were not able to bring with them his head. The Captain Pasha having no longer any thing to fear from Ali, murdered his brothers Said and Achmet, together with their children. Othman, alone, on account of his extraordinary talents for poetry, was spared, and carried to Constantinople. Degnizlé who was sent from that capital to Gaza, with the title of Governor, perished on the road, not without suspicions of poison.

The Emir Yousuf, terrified by these events,

eagerly sought a reconciliation with Djezzar, which the latter, whose position was as yet by no means secure, for large sums had been offered to the Captain Pasha for his dismissal, readily agreed to. The state of the Lebanon at this period, was exactly calculated to inflame the worst passions of the unscrupulous adventurer, to whose keeping its destinies had been confided. A fratricidal war between the Shehaab Princes, into which all the leading Druse Chiefs had been dragged according to their conflicting interests, kept the Mountain in a state of perpetual turmoil and agitation.

The emblem of supreme power was so constantly shifted and changed, from the shoulders of one aspirant to those of another, that it is difficult to present a clear, and at the same time, succinct view, of the political relations which existed between the rulers of the Lebanon, and the dark-minded and rapacious Turk, who, safely ensconced behind the walls of Acre, now began his memorable career of perfidy, dissimulation, and violence.

From this period of history, the Druses will stand more conspicuously forward than hitherto, and the names of their clans become prominently

intermingled with the narrative of events. The jealousies which gave rise to the faction of the Yesbecky, during the administration of the Emir Heider Shehaab, have already been adverted to.* On the other hand, Sheik Ali Jumblatt had gradually enlisted on his side a number of minor feudatories, who were readily induced to rally round his standard, in the hopes of participating in the advantages to be derived from a close and intimate alliance with the Shehaabs.

When, however, the latter ceased to be bound together by a community of feeling and interest, and no longer recognising the guidance of one influential member of their family, broke out into virulent and unseemly squabbles for power and emolument, this Druse Sheik felt himself absolved from any specific duties of allegiance, and boldly pursued designs consonant with his own personal ambition.

* See vol. ii. p. 302.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE importance of the valley of Cœlo-Syria, or as it is commonly called, the Bekaa, to the population of the Lebanon, has frequently been noticed; but by a singular arrangement, while the Government of the latter was conferred by the Pasha of Sidon, the former formed one of the most important districts of the Pashalic of Damascus; and although the Pasha of Sidon exercised an authority perfectly irrelevant of that of Damascus, the Prince of the Lebanon found himself dependent on both the one and the other of those Turkish functionaries.

No arrangement could have been better calculated than this, to promote discord and dissatisfaction in the Mountain, and none was more effectually wielded by the Turks, for keeping it in a state

of division, and subjection. So essential indeed, was the Bekaa to the ruling prince, that the investiture of the Government of the Lebanon was deemed worthless without it, and its withdrawal was of itself sufficient to bring the mountaineers and the Turkish forces into angry collision. One of the last acts of Sheik Daher had been, to assist the Emir Yousuf in wresting the Bekaa from his brother, the Emir Said Achmet, who had factiously procured it from Hassan Pasha il Aadm.

This latter Emir, to render his position as unassailable as possible, had boldly fortified and taken possession of the castle of Ub-Elias, and from that stronghold, levied contributions on all the caravans and travellers, between Damascus and Beyrout; and, it was not till after a somewhat protracted struggle, in which the Emir Yousuf finally defeated and put to flight the Turkish troops from Damascus, that he succeeded in regaining that district; for it is, perhaps, needless to add, that a very moderate bribe sufficed to reconcile the Pasha of Damascus to his defeat and disgrace, and to induce him to transfer his patronage to the successful competitor.

The death of Sheik Daher had deprived the Emir Yousuf of a powerful ally, and left him to struggle, almost single-handed, against a complication of difficulties. His brothers, Said Achmet and Effendi, had enlisted the sympathies, and obtained the support of, the Jumblatts and Amads; the latter, though strictly speaking Yesbecky, having been probably seduced to desert their party, by some prospect of plunder or of pecuniary advantage, with that flexibility of principle for which they are even to this day so eminently distinguished. The Nekads, who always held a kind of neutral position between the Yesbecks and the Jumblatts, sided with the Emir Yousuf; but an indirect attack which their dependants made on some of the soldiers of Djezzar, on their road from Beyrout to Sidon, involved the Emir in that Pasha's displeasure, and Sheik Ali Jumblatt under these circumstances found no great difficulty, especially when he presented the additional attraction of a considerable sum of money, in inducing Djezzar to transfer his favour and protection to the Emirs Said Achmet and Effendi.

The Emir Yousuf finding himself unable to stem

the torrent, convened all the Chiefs of the Mountain at Barook, and there, for the time at least, resigning his authority to his brothers, retired to Ghazir. When the latter, however, discovered that the Emir Yousuf still retained possession of the Bekaa, by virtue of investiture from Mohammed Pasha-il-Aadm, they immediately applied to Djezzar for troops to enable them to drive the Emir from Djebail, on the pretence that he was creating disaffection in those parts, and preventing the collection of the Miri.

Supported by a large force of Turkish soldiers, which Djezzar immediately sent in compliance with this demand, the Emirs proceeded to besiege the town of Djebail; but in the midst of their operations, the troops received sudden orders to retrace their steps to Acre. The Emir Yousuf had gained the Pasha over to his interests by a bribe of 1000*l.*, and a promise of additional revenue.

Armed with the most extensive powers from Djezzar, who now placed under his orders the military contingent which had lately been withdrawn from his brothers, and seconded by the Druse clans of Talhook and Abdel Melik, the Emir took the

most rigorous measures for collecting the money for which he had become responsible. Horsemen, or as they are called, Howalies, were sent to all the villages of the Mountain, with orders not to dismount, not even for their meals, until each village had paid the sum in which it was mulct.

A slight show of resistance was made by the Emir Said Achmet, who calculated on the popular discontent, for retrieving his fallen fortunes; but, although joined by the Jumblatts, he failed in his attempt, and withdrew to Damascus, where, as if to compensate him for his ill success in the Lebanon, Mohammed Pasha-il-Aadm gave him the government of the Bekaa.

The news of this investiture reached the Emir Yousuf while engaged in destroying the Castle of Muctara, the residence of Sheik Ali Jumblatt.

That Druse Sheik, forced to abandon the Shoof, had collected his forces in the neighbourhood of Ub-Elias, where he was awaiting the approach of the Emir Said Achmet, with such assistance as the Pasha of Damascus could spare him. The Emir Yousuf, who fully appreciated the importance of the formidable fortress, which it will be remembered

his brother had erected there, lost no time in marching in that direction, and arrived on the heights above Ub-Elias just as his enemies were effecting their junction. Whatever might have been the result of the action which immediately ensued, had both parties kept firm to their respective causes, its actual denouement rendered the position of the Emir Yousuf apparently more encouraging than ever. For the Jumblatts in the midst of the battle passed over to his side.

The accidental murder of a Jew in the Wady Tame, near Hasbeya, now opened up a fresh source of disorder, of which Djezzar most gladly availed himself. On the Emir Ismail Shehaab either refusing or neglecting to give up the culprit, the fertile district of Merjyoom, near Hasbeya, was ceded by Djezzar to the Emir Yousuf, who taxed it forthwith to the amount of 500*l.* In vain the Emir Ismail proceeded in person to Deir-el-Kammar, to make reclamation, and implore an exemption from such an imposition; his cousin turned a deaf ear to all his entreaties. Stung to the quick by such unprovoked harshness, the Emir Ismail determined to obtain revenge at whatever cost it might be; and

going straight to Acre, offered Djezzar 3000*l.* for the rule of the Shoof.

The temptation was too great to be resisted, and the Emir Ismail, returning to the Lebanon with all the credit and influence of special authority, was not long in gaining adherents.

The Emir Said Achmet again appeared in the field. The Jumblatts once more transferred their allegiance to the temporary recipient of Turkish favour; and the whole, marching rapidly on Deir-el-Kammar, not only forced the Emir Yousuf to abandon that seat of government, but pursued him to Beskinta and the Nebba il Hadeed, in the upper part of the Kesrouan.

It is not to be supposed, that Djezzar for a moment contemplated his recent appointment of the Emir Ismail to be permanent; or, in fact, that he ever really intended confiding the government of the Lebanon to any but the Emir Yousuf, whose long-tried experience and unscrupulous energy alone qualified him, amongst all his rivals and competitors, for that arduous post; but it suited his designs, to keep even those whom he knew were most inclined and able to serve him, in a state of constant depend-

ence and uncertainty. Besides, by occasionally countenancing the ambition of a rival Chieftain, he gratified his avarice and rapacity, at the same time that he carried out his policy.

Indeed, it may be remarked, that, as the welfare of the country which he temporarily governs, never by any chance enters into the head of a Turkish Pasha; as he is—and invariably acts as—a titled robber, oppressing and plundering whenever he can, and to the utmost extent of his power, Djezzar, may be looked upon as a type of that class of dignitaries, into whose hands are intrusted the administration of the various provinces which make up the Turkish Empire.

It is true that, at the present day, they cannot, with such impunity as Djezzar obtained, indulge their savage and bloodthirsty propensities, but his system of peculation and extortion is carried out with as much perseverance as ever, by all Turkish officials of elevated rank, whether civil or military; and, in general, the blighting effect of Turkish dominion is still to be seen, wherever the Crescent extends its baneful influence, in barren and uncultivated wastes, and distracted and impoverished races.

The Emir Yousuf was no sooner in the extremity of distress, than Djezzar hastened to hold him out a helping hand; and, sending a messenger to him in the Kesrouan, brought him under a safe escort to Beyrout, whence, after a most conciliatory reception, he took the Emir back with him to Acre. The Emirs who had thus unexpectedly been foiled of the object of their pursuit, no sooner heard of the detention of the Emir Yousuf, than they sent a letter offering Djezzar 2000*l.* if he would kill him. The latter consented, provided the money was sent forthwith. As soon as he received it, he broke the purport of the negotiation to his guest. The Emir immediately guaranteed the Pasha double that amount, if he would re-instate him. This was just what Djezzar had anticipated. He had fleeced one victim, and had now the prospect of fleecing another.

The Emir Yousuf received the Pelisse of Honour, and returned shortly afterwards to Deir el Kammar, leaving Sheik Saad il Houri as a hostage. His return was so unexpected, that he succeeded in surprising and seizing his brother Said Achmet, as well as the Druse Sheik, Mohammed il Kadi, who had

been the bearer of the letter above alluded to from the Emirs to Djezzar. On his brother being brought before him, the Emir ordered his eyes to be put out,—a sentence which was forthwith carried into execution, and which most effectually relieved him from any further apprehension, on the score of his turbulent and ambitious relative. The unfortunate Druse, in addition to the loss of his eyesight, had his tongue cut out.

Ten years had now elapsed, since Djezzar had mounted to power on the broken fortunes of Sheik Daher ibn Omar. Too politic to give umbrage to the Sultan by any open assumption of independence, he pursued a safer and more efficacious mode of securing his own power,—that of transmitting to the Porte even more than the ordinary revenues of the provinces committed to his trust. By this means he contrived to be left unmolested. Tried by this touchstone, he was found to answer all the purposes of Government, and so long as his conduct continued to furnish this test of loyalty and obedience, no enquiries were made as to his measures and proceedings. The consequence was, the establishment of a system of tyranny and extortion,

of which the only limits were, his own will and caprice.

From this day forward, his thirst for blood was satiated by victims furnished from the prisons of Acre, whom he collected on various pretences from various parts, and whom he tortured and butchered at pleasure; while his avarice was gorged by repeated exactions, wrung from the unprincipled and ambitious Chiefs, who kept the Lebanon in a constant state of disquiet by their selfish aims and machinations, and whose baseness and servility presented constant allurements to his venal and corrupt desires.

CHAPTER XV.

In the year 1788, Djezzar conferred the government of the Lebanon on the Emir Bechir Shehaab, son of the Emir Kassim, son of Omar, who was at that time in the twenty-fourth year of his age. The remarkable circumstances under which the young prince obtained this mark of distinction, have been related in the preceding pages.* The motives of Djezzar for placing him thus prominently forward are evident. The melancholy retribution which had overtaken the Emir Said Achmet, had left the Emir Yousuf comparatively without a rival. As a governor, he was, generally speaking, popular; and in the absence of any influential instigation to induce the Macaatagees to revolt and disaffection,

* See vol. i. p. 194.

might have succeeded in making his position secure and menacing. It was not, therefore, without secret satisfaction, that Djezzar had been informed of the existence of a Prince, in the family of the Shehaabs, who was in every respect qualified to become the chief of a party, and a convenient competitor for the supreme authority in the Mountain.

Bechir had already evinced considerable courage activity, and address. Intrusted by the Emir Yousuf, on more than one occasion, with the collection of the revenue, he had given symptoms of that callous and unbending severity, which in after life was so eminently useful towards the furtherance of his designs, but which raised him up almost insuperable obstacles in the outset of his career. The fame of the successful tax-gatherer had reached Djezzar. He longed to make his acquaintance. Sending for him, therefore, to Acre, he treated him with the most marked distinction, invested him with the Pelisse of honour, gave him 1000 soldiers and told him to go and rule the Lebanon.

The vigorous though futile resistance he encountered from the Emir Yousuf, has been already

recounted.* In less than three months, the latter was a wandering fugitive in the plains of the Houran, while the former, anxious to please his Turkish patron, levied enormous contributions from the various districts supposed to be favourable to his predecessor, with the unflinching hand of a practitioner. Too old for enterprise, and unable to bear the degradation and hardships consequent on his exile, the Emir Yousuf determined to seek from the pity and sympathy of Djezzar, that amelioration of his fate which Fortune had denied him in the field. Going to Acre almost unattended, he entered into the presence of the Djezzar with a kerchief tied round his neck, of which the ends hung down upon his breast,—the emblem of submission—and voluntarily assumed the mien and deportment of a repentant criminal. Improving on the good understanding which was soon established between them, the Emir successfully adopted the usual means for securing the Pasha's favour and patronage. In the mean time, the Emir Bechir having forfeited the regards of all but a few of his own followers, by the unflinching

* See vol. i. p. 196.

rigour of his exactions, had retired to Neeha, under the protection of his influential friend and adherent, Sheik Kassim Jumblatt.

Following the example of the Emir Yousuf, the Emir Bechir now sought a personal interview with Djezzar at Acre, and, offering a bribe of 2000*l.*, succeeded not only in getting his rival thrown into prison, but also obtained for himself, the appointment which the latter had but just obtained, at a very great pecuniary sacrifice. The news of the reinstatement of the Emir Bechir was no sooner noised abroad, than the commotion became general throughout the Mountain. The Metten rose as one man, under the House of Bilemma. The Amads, Talhooks, and Nekads crowded tumultuously to the Shoof, headed by the Emirs Heider, Milheim, and Kadaan Shehaab. The spirit of revolt seemed simultaneous.

To oppose this burst of feeling, the Emir Bechir had nothing but his own dauntless courage, the name and influence of Djezzar, and the comparatively small numerical support of the House of Jumblatt. The only really effective force indeed with which the young prince now commenced his

battle for power, was about 500 Arnaouts taken from the garrison of Acre. Djezzar had just set out on his pilgrimage to Mecca, a duty which he was officially obliged to perform nearly every year. Fortune, during his absence, refused to smile on his aspiring protégé.

A movement on Aindara, intended to repress the Metten, entirely failed. The Nekads fell on a detachment of Turkish soldiers near Shwyfat, on their march from Beyrout to Sidon, and cut it to pieces. A temporary success on the part of the Emir at Abadieh, where he defeated his hostile relatives, was more than counterbalanced by a terrible defeat which he sustained at Baabda, Aug. 15, 1791. The animosity which displayed itself against him in this conflict, might have discouraged a less resolute character. The Arnaouts, though animated by the promise of plunder, were unable to resist the tumultuous onset of an entire population. The Ghurb and Shahaar descended bodily to the strife, while the women rushing amidst the combatants, attacked the troops with volleys of stones, and assisted in their discomfiture.

Desisting from any further attempts to establish

his authority, the Emir now went to meet Djezzar on his return from Mecca, detailed his misfortunes, and throwing the whole onus of the resistance on the emissaries and partizans of the Emir Yousuf, induced him to give orders for the death of his former friend and guardian, who was forthwith consigned to the common hangman. In the meantime, the principal chiefs of the Mountain assembled at Deir el Kammar, and swearing never to submit to the Emir Bechir, sent a messenger to that effect to Djezzar, with a further intimation, that their obedience even to himself could only be obtained, by a relaxation of the unprecedented demands which had lately been made upon them.

The only answer which Djezzar condescended to make to such remonstrances, was that of immediately ordering the Emir Bechir to take all the soldiers at hand, and occupy the Akleem il Haroob, a district of the Shoof, in the vicinity of Sidon, and under the jurisdiction of Sheik Kassim Jumblatt, who alone adhered to his interests. While the latter was actively employed in collecting a party from amongst his immediate dependants and re-

tainers, the Emir Bechir dashingly disengaged a garrison of Arnaouts which had been thrown into Hasbeya, in the Anti-Lebanon, and which had found itself suddenly surrounded and menaced by the insurgent mountaineers. The Pasha's forces now took up their winter quarters in the village of Sheem, in the Akleem il Haroob, and contented themselves for the present with predatory excursions on the enemy, in the immediate neighbourhood.

The Yesbecky, unable to restrain the eagerness of their followers, at length resolved on a night attack. In the midst of darkness and tempest, the clans of Amad, Talhook, and Nekad, marched silently on the devoted village, and ere the forces of Djezzar and the Emir Bechir were well awake, enveloped them in confusion and defeat. By dawn of the following day, they returned to Deir el Kammar, with shouts of triumph and rejoicing, while numbers amongst them appeared grotesquely attired, in the caps and uniforms of the Turkish soldiers who had fallen into their hands.

A forward movement on Deir el Kammar, no doubt prompted by the daring ardour of the Emir

Bechir, was attended with equally disastrous results, and the battle of Sumkaneea, a plain adjacent to that town, at which Sheik Jaja Amad leading on the Druses with the hereditary courage of his family, performed prodigies of valour, convinced Djezzar that other means than brute force were necessary, to enable him to regain his authority in the Lebanon.

Ordering the Emir Bechir and Sheik Kassim Jumblatt to live as private individuals at Acre, he sent for the Druse Sheik, Abdallah il Kadi, and by his hands invested the Emir Heider and Kaadan Shehaab, with the emblem of government. These princes, on their part, engaged to pay down 1000*l.*, and to collect miri to the amount of 30,000*l.*, in six years. The weakness of the new Governors soon evinced itself, from their utter inability to raise the revenue for which they had become responsible.

The absence of Djezzar, on the pilgrimage to Mecca, gave them a short respite; but when the former, on his return, found that his repeated applications for money were merely met by excuses and petitions for delay, he declared the Mountain

in a state of blockade. All the ports along the coast were rigorously closed against the usual, and indeed indispensable importation of corn; and the Lebanon found itself at length, like a garrison, reduced to extremity, by famine.

It was in this emergency, that Gerious Baz, guardian of the sons of the late Emir Yousuf, hastened to Acre, and undertook to liquidate all the claims outstanding against the Emirs Heider and Kaadan, on condition that their authority should be transferred to his young wards. Glad to escape from a posture of affairs which might have eventually become dangerous and embarrassing, and eagerly snatching at any scheme that presented the prospect of replenished coffers, Djezzar at once accepted the proposal, and on the 22nd March, 1793, the Emirs Hussein, Sadadeen, and Selim Shehaab, were installed in office, at the old feudal palace of Deir el Kammar.

It is not probable that a Regency—for such, in fact, was pretty much the nature of the government now established, would have been able to fulfil the promises which the discarded Emirs had failed in accomplishing; but, at all events, the term afforded

for the experiment was not sufficiently long to test its merits.

The Maronite into whose hand the direction of affairs had now fallen, had gained such a complete ascendency over the young Princes, that not only did he take the direction of affairs entirely into his own management, but actually kept their signet in his pocket, and signed official documents, without even deigning to inform them of their contents. By means of flattery and concessions, he had secured the support of the Nekads, the feudal chiefs of Deir el Kammar, and those Druse Sheiks environed the man whom they found willing to be their creature, with a degree of pomp and show, which lulled him into the belief that his power was formidable and imposing. With short-sighted arrogance, they boasted of their influence amongst the principal families of their sect, and represented the Amads and Jumblatts as completely under their guidance.

Misled and deluded by such pretensions, Gerious Baz, whose experience had hitherto been confined to the relative weight and importance of the Maronite clans only, unhesitatingly adopted the pre-

dilections and partialities of his wily advisers. The Druses, however, were not slow in perceiving the degrading tutelage under which the Emirs were placed, and scorning to become instruments for the aggrandizement of one whom they viewed as a fellah, and he, too, a Christian, determined on escaping from an allegiance so repugnant to their pride, even though it were at the cost of calling to their aid, the very Prince, against whose rigour they had so lately rebelled. The Emir Bechir, who scarcely needed such a summons, immediately with characteristic energy left Sidon, placed himself at the head of his adherents, and without waiting for the sanction of Djezzar, announced his presence in the mountain, by a sudden attack on Deir el Kammar.

The Emirs, after such a species of resistance as might be expected in such an unexpected emergency, effected a disorderly retreat to Abeigh, and from thence, on the advice of Gerious Baz, made the best of their way to Djebail. The Nekads dispersed themselves in various directions. Not forgetting the necessity of ingratiating himself with the man whose authority he had thus daringly

set at nought, and whose consent was indispensable for the stability and permanence of his assumed power, the Emir Bechir at once adopted the most stringent measures, for collecting such a sum of money as might induce Djezzar to connive at his proceedings. An insurrection was the natural consequence.

The feudal dependants of the House of Bilemma, amounting to some thousands, took possession of the road from Beyrout to Damascus, and by this well chosen position, interrupted all communication between the Kesrouan and the Shoof. A desperate battle, however, at the Khan Kehaily, in which the Emir Bechir repeatedly rallied in person his wavering forces, with undaunted courage and perseverance, proved fatal to the hopes of the insurgents, and the Metten was given up to indiscriminate plunder.

The booty acquired in this foray came most opportunely to the Emir's relief, and was forthwith shared by him with Djezzar, who with well-timed dissimulation sent an Aga, at the head of a large force, to Beyrout, apparently to support the audacious aspirant in his ambitious views, but with

secret instructions to seize him, and bring him to Acre. On his arrival there, the Emir was put into chains. Djezzar was on the point of going to Mecca, and this extraordinary, but characteristic proceeding, was merely a measure of precaution, suggested by his dread of the Emir's rising power and influence, which during his absence might assume a dangerous aspect. On his return from the pilgrimage, Djezzar felt that he might again let loose his pet lion, and on the 19th of June, 1794, the Emir Bechir once more assumed the reins of government; his wife and children, however, together with the wife of Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, being left at Acre, as hostages.

The Druse Sheiks all went in state to salute him, and met with a most courteous reception. It appeared as though some potent genius had terrified all opposition, and subdued all rivalries; while the Emir's mildness and urbanity presented a striking contrast to his usual roughness and overbearance. The Nekads, whose violent but unsuccessful partizanship, in favour of the sons of the Emir Yousuf, during the late struggle, had entailed upon them the destruction of their palaces

at Deir el Kammar, were now the first to submit to the Emir, and were cordially received.

Gerious Baz, and his young protégés, had gone to Damascus, resigning a contest which seemed to be hopeless, and everything seemed to conspire towards the stability of the Emir's position. He himself, however, well knew the elements of turbulence, which secretly existed beneath such apparent union and tranquillity, and he determined by one relentless act of rigour, to forestall the workings of rebellion, in a quarter which had more than any other given umbrage and disquiet to the House of Shehaab. Sheik Bechir was head of the Jumblatts. On the death of his father, Sheik Kassim, whose principles he had hitherto systematically opposed, finding the general opinion in favour of the Emir Bechir throughout the Shoof, too strong to be resisted, he at once resolved to give him the benefit of his influence and support, and scrupled not to countenance his darkest designs. The swords of the Amads were ready for the highest bidder. These two clans were thus secured to the Emir's interests, and prepared to do his bidding.

A grand divan was appointed to be assembled at Ebtedeen, Feb. 23rd, 1795. On the appointed day, the feudal princes of the Lebanon assembled in great pomp and state. The Meedan of Ebtedeen resounded with the neighing of steeds pouring through the portals, as each successive chieftain arrived with his retainers, and the charging to and fro of horsemen in the wild excitement of the game of the jeered. The Nekads were represented by ten of their most powerful Sheiks, men formidable by their acknowledged bravery and tried experience, able devisers of intrigue, restless conspirators, who with submission on their lips, burned with impatience to thwart, if possible, the vigorous arm which now repressed, and curbed their wonted daring.

Shortly before mid-day the divan was declared sitting, and all the Chiefs moved towards the grand stair-case, which led to the council room, and which was strictly guarded by the Jumblatts and Amads. All alike were required to surrender their swords and deposit their arms, previous to admittance. The Emir Bechir, surrounded by his secretaries and officials, received his feudal col-

leagues with that dignity and courtesy, for which he was already pre-eminently distinguished. A mysterious coldness, which at first seemed to spread over the meeting, was for a time dissipated by the usual presentation of sherbet, coffee, and pipes; but still a sensation of mistrust, if not of terror, gradually crept into the hearts of all present. It was evident that some grave disclosure, at least, was in contemplation.

At length the Emir Bechir rose from his seat and left the room, presently followed by Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, and the Sheiks Amad. The Nekads suddenly found themselves isolated, but ere they had time to endeavour, by mutual inquiries, to fathom the meaning of such unusual movements, their executioners stood before them, and in less than ten minutes their throats were cut![*] The Lebanon must have felt the presence of a master spirit, throughout its most distant ranges.

As soon as the intelligence of this slaughter reached Deir el Kammar, the whole of the remaining Nekad Sheiks, whose absence alone had saved them from the fate of their relatives, made a pre-

[*] This is a common mode of putting to death in the Lebanon.

cipitate flight to Acre, where they were shortly afterwards joined by Gerious Baz, and the young Emirs. The results of this unscrupulous measure were sensibly felt in the peace and tranquillity which prevailed throughout the Mountain, for a considerable time afterwards. The public revenue was rigorously levied, and punctually transmitted to Djezzar, by the Emir, who thus took the most efficient method of securing his favour and support —that of redeeming his pecuniary pledges.

To assail the power of the Prince of the Lebanon upon frivolous pretexts, and by dubious measures, was an experiment which Djezzar was too experienced to attempt. Nevertheless, time and vigilance would no doubt have enabled him to throw the firebrand of discord with effect, even amongst those supporters of the Emir Bechir who seemed most faithfully devoted to his interests, had not his attention being directed to events of far graver importance, and far more nearly affecting his personal security, than the party squabbles of a feudal aristocracy.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE expedition of the French into Egypt, under Napoleon Buonaparte, at this period, had begun to create an immense sensation throughout the population of Syria, as it left amongst them a prestige of French military power, which not even their reverse at Acre was sufficient to efface. It will be readily imagined that, a more than ordinary excitement prevailed amongst the "fideles" of the Lebanon, on the expected approach of a great Christian power to regions which had so long been prostrate at the feet of the enemies of the Cross, and that the Maronites indulged in the most extravagant anticipations of the brilliancy of their future destinies.

Whether the Emir Bechir Shehaab, whose family, if not individual inclination in favour of Chris-

tianity, was already pretty well understood by the Turkish authorities, had indirectly and unguardedly expressed any sympathy with the invaders, or whether Napoleon had despatched a secret emissary to the Lebanon, before commencing his march into Syria, cannot be determined. At all events, the watchful jealousy of Djezzar had, at an early period of the campaign, been directed towards the Emir; a feeling which was not much allayed by the indifference and apathy evinced by that Prince to a summons which had been sent him, to put the mountaineers into an attitude of defence and resistance.

That communications were opened, sooner or later, by Napoleon, with the Emir, is certain; for one of his letters was intercepted, and taken to Djezzar. The contents tended in some degree to quiet his uneasy suspicions, for in it, Napoleon accused his contemplated ally of neglect, for not having answered a previous letter. In fact, the Emir Bechir, in 1799, as afterwards, in 1840, had determined not to be too precipitate in his adhesion to either party, reserving for himself the convenient right of declaring for the conquerors.

The arrival of Sir Sidney Smith, off Acre, with the British squadron, consisting of the Tigre, Theseus, and Alliance, men-of-war, on the 15th March, 1799, relieved Djezzar in some measure from his apprehensions, as it paved the way for a display of skill, gallantry, and heroism, which left an indelible impression of British prowess on the minds of the Arabs—an impression which the operations under Sir Robert Stafford, and Sir Charles Napier, in the same quarter, in 1840, signally revived and strengthened.

" Sir Sidney wrote a circular letter to the Princes and Chiefs of Mount Lebanon, and to the Sheiks of the Druses, in which he exhorted them to do their duty to their Sovereign, by intercepting the supplies of the enemy on their way to the French camp. This sagacious proceeding had all the good consequences that might have been expected from it. Two ambassadors were sent to the Commodore, informing him, that in consequence of his mandates, measures had been taken to cut off the supplies hitherto furnished to the invaders; and, as a proof of the accuracy of this assertion, eighty French prisoners who had been

captured in the defence of the convoys, were placed at the disposal of the British."*

Fortunately for the credit of the British name, the Commodore of 1799 had not, like the one of 1840, been commissioned to proclaim to the Mountaineers that any Powers had engaged "to recommend to the Sultan an arrangement which would render their condition happy and comfortable!"

The preceding extract might lead to the supposition that there was unanimity amongst the mountaineers, in their opposition to the French. Such was far from being the case. The Druses, it is true, displayed all the zeal which the British Commodore had recommended. Their leading Sheiks assembled at Abeigh, and around the sacred tomb of Said Abdallah, swore eternal enmity to the Franks. The Maronites, on the contrary, prayed for their success, and promoted it as much as they dared.

A convoy of wine from the Emirs of the House of Bilemma was stopped and dispersed in the Bekaa, by the Druse Sheiks, Amad. The Talhooks guarded the passes of the river Damour, near Sidon, and

* *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith*, vol. i. p. 184.

having seized a Maronite in the act of conveying a mule-load of provisions to the French camp at Acre, sent him tied and bound to the Mutsellim of Beyrout, who immediately forwarded the culprit in a boat, to Sir Sidney Smith.

This circumstance led to somewhat unforeseen consequences; for the British Commodore, on the prisoner being brought before him, questioned him minutely as to the state of feeling amongst the mountaineers, and especially as to the character and popularity of the Emir Bechir. The replies which this examination extracted were such, that Sir Sidney determined on opening an intercourse with that Prince, which he at once commenced, by making the prisoner the bearer of a letter to Ebtedeen. The readiness with which the Emir accepted the proffered friendship of the British Commodore, and the alacrity he displayed in sending an answer to his communication, were of themselves sufficient indications, that some decisive change had taken place in the position of the belligerent parties.

Hasoon Wurd, a Druse Ockal, a few days afterwards, arrived on board the Tigre with presents to the Commodore from the Emir, and a letter

containing professions of the warmest confidence and esteem. But, in the meantime, the siege of Acre had been raised, and the French were already in full retreat towards Egypt! Sir Sidney had sought an ally, he was now burdened with a client; for the Emir, who dreaded the wrath of Djezzar, for his vacillating conduct, implored the Commodore to use all his influence to get him reinstated in the Pasha's favour and regard.

The fact of the Emir's adhesion having been so evidently the result of policy rather than of duty, made no difference in the Commodore's proceedings towards him; and as a proof of his desire to cultivate a friendship which he himself had courted, he sent a near relative of his own who had been badly wounded during the siege, to benefit by the change of air in the Emir's mountain abode. The care, attention, and kindness which the young officer experienced from his host, confirmed Sir Sidney in his partiality for the Emir, whose interests he thenceforward advocated with the greatest zeal and promptitude.

The advance of the grand Turkish army to Aleppo, on its road to Egypt, afforded the Emir

an opportunity of atoning, in some degree, for his past remissness in the Sultan's cause. Hasoon Wurd, his confidential agent, was dispatched to the Vizier's head-quarters as soon as it reached Hamah, with assurances of the Emir's submission and allegiance, with offers of as large a military contingent from the Lebanon as its population could afford, and unreserved complaints of the vexatious tyfanny of Djezzar, to whose conduct he attributed the apathy which apparently prevailed throughout the Mountain, during the recent operations.

As a proof of his sincerity and devotion, the granaries of Baalbec and the Bekaa were placed at the disposal of the Turkish troops, who thus found themselves supplied with abundance of provisions of every description. The Grand Vizier, delighted with such enthusiasm, took upon himself to give the Emir a signal proof of his Sovereign's approbation, and sent him a Firman, in which he nominated him "Governor of the entire range of the Lebanon, and all its adjacent plains, with exemptions from all interference from, or dependence on any Turkish Pasha whatever."

The British Commodore, who was now enjoying

a short repose after his late brilliant successes, took the opportunity of an invitation which the Emir sent him about this time, to indulge his curiosity, by making the personal acquaintance of a Prince, whose fame and influence had rendered him so conspicuous. Not wishing, however, to excite the jealousy of the Turks by the display and ostentation which would necessarily have attended a public visit to Ebtedeen, he begged the Emir to name a place of rendezvous at a more convenient distance from the sea-shore.

The village of Ainanoob, about half-way between that place and Beyrout, was fixed upon as an appropriate spot. The feudal palace of the Druse House of Raslan, at this place, with its spacious quadrangles and its sparkling jets-d'eau, rendered it peculiarly fitting for scenes of pleasure and festivity. Here, accordingly, on the day appointed, in the month of June 1799, the two chiefs met, each accompanied by a cortêge characteristic of his taste and disposition.

While the Emir descended from his palace, accompanied by a numerous train of Emirs and Sheiks, gorgeously dressed, with all their vassals

and dependants in grand holiday attire, bristling with swords, yatagans, and pistols, and making the welkin resound with shouts of rejoicings, war-songs, and incessant discharges of musketry; the gallant Commodore silently wound his way up the steep ascent of the Lebanon, in his simple uniform, accompanied by two or three officers, and followed by his jolly tars escorting a long string of mules, carrying 100 paniers of rice as a substantial oblation to the Prince of the Lebanon; who, on his part, had prepared for his guest's acceptance two Arab mares of the choicest breed.

Whatever was the etiquette, or the nature and extent of the civilities observed on this occasion, the first of the kind, probably, which had occurred since the time of the Crusades, when Arab and Frank Chieftains would sometimes endeavour by an hour's mutual courtesy, to efface the impressions produced by years of hostility, both parties were favourably prepossessed in each other's favour. Sir Sidney Smith subsequently displayed a sympathy and regard for the Emir Bechir, amounting to generous devotion; while the latter, to the last hour of his life, always adverted to the character

and conduct of his British friend and protector, with expressions of gratitude and admiration.

Notwithstanding his Vizierial Firman, the Emir found himself ill at ease, as long as the resentment of Djezzar had not been propitiated; and, consequently, one of the first measures of Sir Sidney, on his return to Acre, was to urge that Pasha to send the Emir the usual yearly Pelisse of investiture. But the Turkish army had completed its passage through Syria; the Grand Vizier had arrived at Gaza, intent upon objects of far greater moment than the government of the Lebanon; and Djezzar, consequently, had no overpowering motives to induce him to abandon the angry suspicions which the Emir's late conduct had excited in his breast.

The Commodore could extract from him nothing but promises and professions, which their very manner of being conveyed showed to be hollow and insincere. Unable to succeed in his mediation, disgusted with the ingratitude of a man who, no doubt, he had long viewed with abhorrence for his notorious despotism and cruelty, and compelled by more important events to quit the scene of his

glory, he determined to give the tyrant the benefit of such a dispatch to Constantinople, as the virtuous indignation of a Briton could dictate, and which he concluded, by warning the Porte against employing a Governor whose wilful and obstinate conduct, endangered the amicable relations which existed between the Turkish and British governments. Djezzar, however, maintained his post, probably more countenanced than ever, because he had resisted the demands of a Frank and a giaour!

Not many months elapsed before his intrigues amongst the Mountain faction began to bear their usual fruits. The prominence given to the Emir Bechir during the recent proceedings, the unusual good fortune which seemed to have attended his relations with the Grand Vizier, added probably to his not very conciliatory deportment towards the Druse Sheiks, whom his uncompromising energy led him to treat as chiefs over whom permanent control could only be obtained by a rigorous and constant assertion of authority, all combined to create a feeling of jealousy and dislike, which only awaited the sanction and support of a constituted

Turkish functionary, to break out into civil commotion.

Some of the Amads had studiously reported to Djezzar, the nature of the Emir's charges against him in the camp of the Grand Vizier. The Talhooks and Abdelmeliks were secretly inclined to support any measures, by which they might avenge themselves on the relations of intimacy and cordiality now springing up between the Emir Bechir and Sheik Bechir Jumblatt. With such sentiments rife amongst the feudatories of the Lebanon, Djezzar had only to throw the weight of his name into the balance, to render the Emir Bechir's position extremely critical.

A tumultuous meeting of the Yesbecky on the plains of Barook, had been promptly dispersed by the Emir, with his constant vigilance and ability. The leading chiefs of that faction had proclaimed the Emir Soliman Ali Shehaab as their chief. As soon, however, as Djezzar's intentions were known to be in consonance with their own feelings of dissatisfaction against the Emir Bechir, they readily abandoned the object of their choice, and went to salute the young Emirs, sons of the Emir Yousuf,

who were once again sent by that Pasha to assume the reins of government at Deir el Kammar. These Princes, accompanied by Gerious Baz, the fugitive Nekad Sheiks, and 6000 Turkish soldiers, entered that town, November 17, 1799.

The Emir Bechir and Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, unable to resist such an adverse combination of circumstances, found it advisable to effect a retreat towards the northern part of the Mountain, and after a slight halt at Hamana, in the Metten, found refuge amongst the Maronites of Bisherry.

The fall of the Emir Bechir was now made known to Sir Sidney Smith, who had not left the coast; and he hastened to render what succour he could to his friend. Recommending him, in a private letter, to seek an interview with the Grand Vizier at El Arisch, he placed a ship at the Emir's disposal, in the harbour of Tripoli; and urged his immediate presence at the head-quarters of the Turkish army, whither he was himself about to proceed. On the 15th December, the Emir accordingly embarked, and soon reached his destination.

Introduced by Sir Sidney to the Grand Vizier,

his reception was in the highest degree flattering and encouraging, as far at least as assurances of approbation and promise of support could make it; but it soon became evident, that there was no immediate prospect of any tangible means being afforded, to enable him to resume his government; and, after a stay of four days, the Emir took the opportunity of Sir Sidney's sailing for Cyprus, to accompany him. Here the Commodore left him.

Whatever might have been the inducement held out to him to take such a step, the Emir Bechir visited Alexandria in the spring of 1800. The friendship, however, of Sir Sidney Smith, to which he fondly looked as the means of retrieving his fortunes, was still destined to be barren of any useful results; and, at length, wearied of wandering from place to place, he was fain to return once more to his native mountains. Landing at Tripoli, he immediately went to Kulaat Hosn, a fortress some distance above that town, accompanied by his brother, the Emir Hassan, and determined to await there the course of events.

Already had his absence began to be regretted by the fickle population of the Lebanon. The

measures adopted by Gerious Baz and the young Emirs, in order to satisfy the rapacious cravings of Djezzar, had aroused wide and general feelings of discontent, and desultory conflicts were constantly taking place between the peasants and the Turkish soldiers, sent by the Pasha to support the Emirs in the collection of the revenue.

Many of the Emirs and Sheiks likewise profited by the unlimited powers intrusted in their hands for raising the public funds, to satisfy their own exigencies; and, under these pretences, extorted from the peasantry even more than the State required. The want of a master-hand, in fact, began to be felt; and the people, harassed by various rulers, exposed to petty tyranny, vexation, and injustice, longed for the Prince, who, if he himself exacted with severity, had, at all events, the will and energy to save them from falling a prey to a multiplicity of feudal depredators.

So universal at length became the popular cry in favour of the Emir Bechir, that he left Kulaat Hosn, amidst the most extravagant rejoicings, and borne along by the acclamations of the mountaineers, arrived at Ebtedeen more like a sovereign

returning to resume a power which he had peaceably delegated, than an exile on whom fortune had capriciously smiled. This year, A.D. 1800, is commemorated in the Arabic Manuscript, as the "Sint il Ameeiy," or the year of the general rising.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUCH an unequivocal demonstration seems to have surprised as much as it chagrined Djezzar, and that tyrant, whose disposition had long been callous to even the commonest sensations of humanity, gave orders to his Arnaouts to carry fire and sword into every quarter within their reach. The silk crops throughout the plain lying at the foot of the mountain range, the main support of the peasantry, being now far advanced, and for the most part unprotected, were wantonly fired; and long columns of smoke ascending in various directions, betokened the misery inflicted to gratify the malicious spleen of a Turkish Pasha.

The Emir Bechir, immediately on the news being conveyed to him of these ruthless proceedings,

summoned the Mountaineers, and determined to prevent a continuation of such ravages. For orders had been received from Acre, to carry this system of destruction all over the Mountain, and the Turkish soldiers boldly advanced to put them into execution. The Emir met them at Areya, but was temporarily repulsed, and driven back to Abadieh. Reinforcements, however, being opportunely brought up by the Sheik Bechir, he was enabled to resume the offensive, and the contest finally terminated in the troops being driven back from all their positions, and pursued to the very walls of Beyrout.

Gerious Baz, who on the part of the Emirs, the sons of the Emir Yousuf, had been mainly instrumental in persuading Djezzar to persevere in his endeavours to force them on the Mountain's acceptance, at length perceived that the struggle was hopeless. While he sent messengers to the Emir Bechir to sue for an accommodation, he wrote in such terms to Djezzar, as to induce him to withdraw his troops. It was finally agreed, that the government of Djebail should be given to the young Emirs, on condition that they would ac-

knowledge the Emir Bechir as Governor of the Mountain.

The competitors for the Pelisse of honour who had sprung up during these transactions, afforded Djezzar quite a harvest of gold. The Amads paid handsomely to get the Emir Abbas Shehaab named Governor. Another party tempted the Pasha with the sum of 2000*l.*, provided he would transfer his patronage to the Emirs Soliman and Kaadan. Djezzar appointed them all, for they all brought money. The different Chiefs now marched about the Mountain, and asserted their respective rights by force of arms. The confusion was as complete as any Turkish Pasha could possibly have desired, for the furtherance of his most insidious views.

Fortunately for the welfare of the Lebanon, the presence of the Emir Bechir saved it from the utter ruin which would have been entailed upon it, had the instruments of Djezzar's atrocious policy been allowed a much longer lease of power. In the year 1802, the rival Princes of the House of Shehaab were compelled to seek refuge amongst the Arabs of the Houran, whilst their successful kinsman, he who alone was fitted, by his disposi-

tion and capacities, for the arduous post to which their vanity had induced them to aspire, gradually assumed that influence and ascendency, which enabled him henceforward to make even the Pashas to whom he nominally owed his power, sue for his friendship, and propitiate his favour and protection.

A present of six thorough-bred Arab horses, and 1000*l.*, which the Emir now sent to Djezzar, if it flattered his pride, must have painfully reminded him of his impotence, and made it difficult for him to decide, whether to look upon this mark of homage, as a compliment or an insult. Whatever might have been his intended machinations, amongst the Mountain parties which continued to avail themselves of his treacherous sanction, for the furtherance of their private designs, the Lebanon was spared the degradation of witnessing their development; for death at length terminated his odious existence.

It would be both difficult and revolting to give even a summary of his crimes; and to describe a character which had scarcely one redeeming quality, is to say the least, an unenviable task. If therefore any further allusion is made to the conduct of

a ruler who was permitted, for nearly thirty years, to gratify the vilest passions which can possess the human breast, without check or constraint, it is not so much with the view of delineating a moral depravity which the mind shudders to contemplate, or to review the details of a career which sounded the lowest depths of wickedness and infamy, as to invite attention to what must have been the nature and complexion of that government, whose delegated power he exercised, and whose spirit and principles he scarcely exaggerated.

His taste for architecture has sometimes been put forth as a palliation for his cruelty and tyranny; and the fact of a considerable number of Arab manuscripts having been collected by his orders, adduced as an evidence of his patronage of learning. It must be difficult for an impartial mind to concede to him even the small merit which such an eulogium would seem to confer. Since the same caprice which made him collect books, might, by a sudden evolution, have induced him to burn them; indeed it is not hazarding too much to say, that in many instances, had their former owners, from whom he used most unceremoniously to de-

mand them, refused to comply with his fancy, he would have burnt books and owners together.

For the oven was one of his favourite instruments of torture, and the process of being baked alive, was the ordinary punishment inflicted by Djezzar on those who presumed to have fastidious ideas about their own rights, whether in money, lands, or chattels, when he wished to possess them. Confessions were extorted from political delinquents by the application of the "iron cap," an invention which owed its origin, exclusively to his fertile conception for inflicting torment.

The delinquent, after having been seated on the floor, had his head shaved, when the cap, which was shaped like a tarboosh, was brought from an adjacent furnace, red hot, and thrust down upon his bare skull, making a sound like meat frying. One unfortunate Christian, who is still living in Beyrout, having been reduced to beggary by the constant exactions which were made upon him, was still supposed to be obstinately withholding some treasure. Djezzar, finding at last that his suspicions were groundless, determined to avenge himself for his disappointment, by calling on him

to turn Mussulman, and on his resolute refusal to do so, made him sit naked on a heated brazier; the consequence was, his lower extremities were broiled away. The bastinado was frequently inflicted on the soles of the feet, until the foot was beaten away altogether.

Two edifices which Djezzar erected in Acre, a mosque and a public bath, may certainly elicit a certain degree of praise, and excite the wonder of the traveller; for the collection of marble, granite, and porphyry columns contained in them, and for which he ransacked the ruins of Cæsarea, Tyre, and Askalon, present a gorgeous appearance. But when the means to which he resorted for building them are considered, they must be viewed with feelings of horror, rather than of admiration.

The labourers employed, were all the miserable victims of his tyranny and despotism, and were led out to their task in files of twenty and thirty, escorted by soldiers, who urged them to continued exertion by blows and stripes. Generally in the afternoon, the Pasha himself would go forth to superintend the works, surrounded by paraphernalia of power which excited sensations of awe and terror.

Mounted Janissaries most splendidly accoutred, and armed up to the teeth, opened the progress from the Serail, followed by scores of tefeketchis, or police, on foot, each carrying a heavy kurbash, made of bull's hide. Immediately in front of the Pasha marched the public executioner, carrying the "balta," or axe, reflecting the rays of the sun from its well polished surface. The procession was closed by an indiscriminate multitude of eunuchs, mamelukes, pipe-bearers, and domestics, ready to administer to the wants of their Chief, and execute his slightest commands.

The Pasha's carpet would now be spread on a conspicuous station, commanding a view of the whole field of operations, and while he luxuriously smoked his pipe, reclining on cushions of the finest Damascus silk, his lynx-eyed glance would roll about from spot to spot, with petrifying influence. For cessation from labour, in his presence, was certain death. Indeed, exhaustion and fatigue frequently spared the executioner the trouble of exercising his office. Shouts and imprecations, cries and groans, intermingled with the sounds of blows inflicted by the unremitting kurbash, gave

evidence of the unnatural impulse afforded to human toil. The fortifications of Acre were repaired and extended by the same infernal activity.

If Djezzar displayed the sanguinary and brutal passions of the Turk in the execution of his public functions, it can hardly be supposed that his conduct in domestic life, would prove an exception to the fierce and jealous excitements which at times disturb the peace of the harem. It is questionable, however, whether even the annals of Turkish lust and cruelty could furnish an account rivalling in deliberate atrocity, the treatment he dealt out to some of his concubines, against whom his suspicions were once aroused.

It has been more than once remarked, that as Pasha of Damascus, he was obliged to conduct the pilgrimage to Mecca. His harem, consisting of nearly one hundred white beauties, was placed during his absence under the care of eunuchs, strictly charged to watch over their health, safety, and especially their continence: a precaution the more necessary, as his Mameluke guard, amounting to four hundred, consisted of some of the handsomest young men in the East. Djezzar used

generally to take half this number with him, as an escort. The remaining half, who stayed behind, not being perplexed with much duty, used to lounge about the various courts of the Serail, smoking, playing, and amusing themselves; at the same time all intercourse with the surrounding chambers was rigidly interdicted, and, indeed, from the vigilance of the eunuchs, next to impossible.

By whatever motives actuated, whether bribed by the Mamelukes, or from feelings of revenge against their master for some ill-usage—it is certain that on one occasion, Djezzar had not long taken his departure for Mecca, before they began to relax in their accustomed watchfulness.

At certain hours of the day, when the officers of the Mamelukes were moving about in the courts below, the ladies would coax their black arguses, for permission to repair to the blinds of the windows to look at them. As they disputed on the respective merits of the gentlemen who passed, each would be led to select her favourite, and by an easy transition, would feel desirous of informing him of her preference. Writing was dangerous, and a message still more so; but the language of

flowers is understood in the East; and the presentation of a budding rose, a pink, or a carnation, is the billet-doux of the country. Thus several intimations were given from those within to those without, and the favoured Mamelukes no doubt communicated their good fortune to each other.

Four or five of them at length determined on effecting an entrance into the harem. One was the Husnadar, or Treasurer of the Pasha, and brother of the Seraskier, or Commander-in-chief, Selim Pasha. The black eunuchs, who are the keepers of the harem, have each a key of the outer door. This obstacle, however, was overcome, and the suitors contrived to obtain the means of admission. After midnight, when all was quiet, the Husnadar and his companions opened the door; and being, as we may suppose, previously apprized where they were to go, found their expectant mistresses.

In the mean time, the arduous and painful track of the Desert was traced and retraced, and Djezzar re-entered Acre. On his first visit to the harem, his keen eye soon told him that all was not as it used to be. To the usual submissive and servile manners of his women, was added something which showed him,

that other thoughts reigned in their bosoms besides dress and ornaments. He asked himself what it could be, and soon found a clue to guide his suspicions. Sitting one day, at a window that looked on the outer door of the harem, he observed a Christian named Nummum, with a nosegay in his hand, knock at the door, and deliver it to a slave.

At night, when he retired to his harem, he thought he saw the same nosegay stuck carelessly under the tarboosh of one of his concubines, the lovely Zuleika, with the flowers hanging down and the stalks upwards, according to the Eastern manner. "Come hither, girl," said the Pasha; "where did you get that nosegay?" She readily answered, "Out of the garden." He put on a smiling look: "Come, come, I know better than that; I saw Nummum the Christian with it. Tell me, my darling, who your admirer is, and I'll see if I cannot give you to him in marriage. I have intended to find you a husband for some time." The foolish Zuleika believed him to be in earnest, and told him she thought it came from the Husnadar.

Previous to the incident, and while a prey to secret

jealousy, his suspicions had already fallen on the Mamelukes, and he had resolved within himself, that he would make such an example of some of those who had been left behind, as should deter any one in future from similar attempts on his honour. His scheme was deeply laid, and not the gust of sudden passion. One day he told Selim Pasha, his Seraskier, that he was resolved on an incursion into the province of the Druses, against the Emir Yousuf Shehaab.

Letters were accordingly written to the neighbouring Chiefs, to hold themselves and their men in readiness, and the place of meeting was to be at Khan Mergyoom, near Hasbeya. Selim Pasha assembled the Howaara, the Arnaouts, and the Dellati irregular troops, whilst Djezzar reviewed his Mamelukes, giving some leave to go, and ordering others to stay behind, according to the distinction he had made in his own mind, of the guilty from the innocent. The Husnadar was among those who remained at Acre. Selim Pasha marched with his soldiers and arrived near Hasbeya, where he encamped as had been agreed, to give time for the other Chiefs to join him.

Thus Djezzar had contrived, under pretext of war, to get rid of all such as he thought likely to be troublesome to him, in the execution of his bloody plan.

It was shortly after the march of Selim Pasha to Hasbeya, that the conversation above alluded to occurred, between him and Zuleika. No sooner had she confessed to him her partiality for the Husnadar, than pretending to be satisfied, Djezzar rose from his seat, took his balta, or axe, with him, and walked into his garden. When there, he ordered Zuleika to be sent to him.

She came, and the Pasha, no longer concealing his rage, furiously seized her by the hair, and threw her on the ground: then placing his foot on her neck, and holding his balta above her, exclaimed: "Wretch, tell me the truth! thou hast already confessed thyself guilty; tell me who are thy accomplices, or I will kill thee!" In vain she protested that she had none, and was conscious of no guilt; he threw away the balta, and drawing his sabre, severed her head from that bosom, which in happier moments, she had made the tyrant's pillow. He commanded the corpse to be thrown into a well.

It is related that three others, whose fidelity he doubted, met with a similar fate at his hands. When fatigued, and aware how much more yet remained to be done, he sent for four Howaara soldiers, men naturally of a ferocious character, and ordering fresh victims into his presence, bade them continue the work of death. Quite unusual as it is for men even of a grave character, more especially soldiers, to enter the harem of a Pasha, their summons caused much wonder among the Mamelukes in attendance in the Seraglio.

The cries of the women who had perished had already been heard, but the frequent floggings which used to occur within, made them at first pay little attention to such sounds. As they were busied in conjectures on what this proceeding could mean, a repetition of the cries was heard. These, uttered with all the vehemence of distress, suddenly ceased. They remained mute and listening—again the piercing shrieks were heard, and again as suddenly hushed; but each voice was different from the one which had preceded it.

Assembling round the door of the harem, they managed to speak to one of the guards. They

induced him to come out, and earnestly asked him what those cries meant. At first he pretended that there was nothing extraordinary happening; but they were not to be deceived. At last the fatal truth was extracted from him, that the Pasha was murdering his women! The Mamelukes stopped not to hear more. Conscious of their guiltiness, they looked at each other with appalled countenances, and the stoutest heart for a moment trembled.

At last they took courage, and some of the most resolute, and perhaps the most culpable, spoke.

They asked, "What is to be expected for us, from a cruel and jealous disposition like Djezzar's? We shall be the next victims—let us be true to each other, and either die together, or save ourselves." They immediately flew to their apartments, armed themselves, and prepared for resistance. Zuleika's lover, the Husnadar, had an apartment in a tower, which formed part of the palace. This tower, as containing the treasury, was more than commonly strong, with an iron door, and grated windows looking on to the harem. To this building they all went, barred and blockaded themselves, and awaited the event.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In the mean time, Djezzar, with his four executioners, was carrying on the horrid massacre; and fifteen young and beautiful creatures were murdered that day. When the slaughter was over, and the terror that prevailed within a little abated, some of his eunuchs took courage to tell him of the defection of his Mamelukes. He was furious, and sent to them immediately to quit the tower. Their reply was firm: "It is true, we are your property, but you have embrued your hands so deeply in human blood, and are so thirsty for ours, that our measures are irrevocably taken." It so happened that the powder magazine adjoined the treasury, and was a part of the tower.

They added, "If you attempt to dislodge us

from this place, we will fight as long as we can defend ourselves, and then will set fire to the powder-magazine, and signalize our end, with the fall of Djezzar and the destruction of Acre. But if you will suffer us to depart unmolested, we will bid adieu to you and to Acre for ever." Frantic with rage, he fired on them with his own hand from the windows of his apartment, but was compelled to shelter himself, as they fired on him in return.

The news soon spread through the city. The extraordinary event of slaves in rebellion against their master, and the noise of musketry from within the palace, with various reports of a general extermination of the women in the harem, all were so full of horror, that the inhabitants retired trembling to their houses, and, shutting their doors, looked forward to the end with a mixture of curiosity and consternation. The commander of the infantry, who was the only military officer in the place, thought it prudent to remain quiet, and the Pasha did not call upon him to act.

As yet, no one had dared to approach Djezzar. At length the Mufti, and some others of the principal inhabitants, resolved to enter his presence,

cost what it might. "We will bring him to reason, if we can," they said; "and if we cannot, he must kill us." They approached him, and began to intercede for the lives of the Mamelukes. They then spoke a little plainer; and told him, he only endangered his own life, and that of all the citizens, by persisting in letting the Mamelukes remain in a place, where one desperate act might blow them all to atoms.

Finally, they begged him, for the honour of a Pasha's name, and the odium it would bring upon him, to give the culprits a free passage. Djezzar seemed to yield. He said—"He would not hinder their departure, provided they would only appear in his presence, that he might reproach them with their ingratitude." The Mamelukes declined this dangerous proposition, and adhered to their resolution; so that the good counsel of the elders profited nothing, and probably left a rancour against themselves in the heart of the tyrant. For three days matters remained in this uncertain state.

On the fourth, it was known that the Mamelukes, to the number of fifteen, had found means to escape,—being those arrived at manhood,—

while the boys were left behind to their fate. Those who had got away, bent their steps towards Khan Hasbeya, and soon arrived at Selim Pasha's tent. Great was the surprise that their appearance excited. The Mamelukes of the Pasha, with their horses fatigued, with no corn, no customary pomp —all announced that something was not right.

When the Husnadar reached his brother's tent, he related to him what had happened; and when he had brought his story to the period of their taking refuge in the tower, he continued—"Thus shut up, and seeing no movement among the soldiers or inhabitants in our favour, we thought it better to contrive some plan of escape. You know that window of the tower which opens on the ditch; you are aware, likewise, that the money chests deposited in the treasury, are all bound with large cords; well, having knocked out some of the bars with our baltas and battle-axes, we made use of the ropes to let ourselves down. But first, we ransacked the chests, and each of us loaded his girdle and pockets with as much money as he could take; then, one by one, we descended through the window;—by the care of some of our friends

in the city, horses were waiting for us; and presently we found ourselves, fifteen in number, outside the walls. Here we sent defiance to the Pasha, and told him he might now take us if he could!"

Selim Pasha did not long deliberate on which side he should range himself. He was a Mameluke, and his brother was a leader of the fugitives. He, therefore, assembled all the principal officers of the camp, and addressed them thus:—"You see here a body of men whom the jealousy of a cruel Pasha would have sacrificed. But who is that Pasha? A rebel to the Porte, driven out of Damascus, and an usurper of the government he holds. As for myself, you know the Sultan some time since made me Waaly* of Sidon and its dependencies; to him, therefore, I owe allegiance, and not to a rebel. Let us then, in avenging the wrongs of these injured men, be faithful to our sovereign; let us—instead of wantonly attacking the Emir Yousuf, against whom we were not sent on the grounds of real aggression, but to remove us out of the way, in order that a tyrant might with more facility execute his bloody designs

* *Waaly* means *Governor*.

against our brethren—let us unite ourselves with the Emir, and, marching against the monster, offer his head as a just tribute to the Porte."

This advice was received with acclamations. A horseman was despatched to the Emir Yousuf, who when acquainted with the defection of the Mamelukes, immediately joined the league, and aided it with money and men. After some days, the allied forces marched to Sidon, and there remained for a time, to mature their plans. Djezzar was quite deserted; his soldiers had abandoned him, and he was loved by no one. Undismayed, he sent for his counsellors, one by one, and asked them what they would advise him to do. Almost all told him his case was desperate, and that he would do well to fly. "Take what you will with you," said they; "but leave us, and save the town from the sufferings of a siege." He scorned their advice. "Go, my friends," he replied; "God is great; and one of these days I shall have the pleasure of thanking you for your prudent counsel."

Hadj Ali,* the author of this narrative, was a

* Hadj Ali was a Mussulman who served as guide, and superintendent of the travelling equipage and baggage, in the service of Lady Hester Stanhope, a situation which he also held subsequently, in the suite of the Princess of Wales.

soldier under Yehya Aga, who commanded a few troops, and who, when these events happened, was encamped at about three hours march from Acre. When Yehya heard what was going forward, he hesitated whose cause he should espouse. Ali signified that he was ready to follow him wherever he chose to go; but added, that if he thought obedience to an unjust master, was a less sacred duty than fidelity to his comrades with whom he had been bred up and fought, then it was with those comrades he must connect his fortunes, and conquer or perish with them. "And such is my resolve," replied the Aga; "their fate and mine shall be one." He accordingly struck his tents and joined Selim Pasha, who had quitted Sidon and was lying before Tyre.

Tyre had remained true to Djezzar, and shut its gates against Selim. Although the town had no garrison, and the whole population did not amount to more than 2000, they were willing to try the issue of a contest. But, on the following day, Selim stormed and sacked it, finding a very considerable booty. The women were violated, the houses plundered, and what could not be carried off, was sold to camp-followers, or thrown away in waste.

Property of all kinds lay scattered in the streets, and all the excesses of Turkish warfare were freely committed. On the next day but one, Selim Pasha reached the environs of Acre, and encamped on Abou Ataby, where he found provisions in abundance.

What was Djezzar now to do? Soldiers he had none, and but few friends. His fate seemed certain, and everybody foretold his ruin. Still, however, he remained firm. By means of emissaries, he contrived to disseminate a spirit of defection amongst the troops of the enemy, in holding forth promises of immense reward to those who should show themselves faithful to him. He insinuated that the lot of a brave soldier could only be prosperous under a warlike leader like himself, whose contentions with his neighbours, however they might distress the labouring and manufacturing classes, filled the purses of the troops. These, with other arguments adapted to the occasion, had the desired effect. Djezzar then armed a number of labourers who happened to be in Acre, employed in buildings which he was erecting, and joined them to a few regular soldiers.

They were instructed that, at midnight, when the enemy might be supposed to be asleep, they were to steal forth secretly until they came within the precincts of the camp. Their watchword was to be "Balta," the instrument Djezzar always carried about with him, and the very name of which, from the fatal purposes to which he so often turned it, inspired terror. On arriving at the camp they were to set up a cry of "Balta! Balta!" and to fire their muskets with as much noise as possible.

Djezzar conjectured that the enemy, believing themselves attacked by a larger force than they really were, would be panic-struck and might take to flight; and his anticipations were verified. The precautions used to prevent surprise in European camps are unknown, or seldom practised in those of Orientals. Fear magnified the number of the assailants, and the rebels fled in disorder. Selim Pasha and Soliman Aga (afterwards Pasha of Acre) hovered for some time round the scene of action, until finding that all was lost, they bent their way to Damascus; and the stragglers on the road joining them here and there, they made up a

body of three or four hundred men. The Delattis and Arnaouts retired to Nazareth, and soon afterwards, on professing their penitence, were received again into the service of Djezzar.

From Damascus, Selim Pasha took the road to Aleppo, and from Aleppo went to Constantinople, plundering the villages in his route for subsistence. On arriving, he was seen by the Sultan on a day of royal diversion, and had the honour of exhibiting before him, together with his Mamelukes, in some martial exercises. The Sultan took notice of them, and they were sent to the army, at that time in the field against the Russians, with a promise that when the campaign was over, Selim Pasha should return to Syria with a Firman to remove Djezzar from his government. But Selim was killed in the storming of Ismail, and Djezzar thus lost a troublesome enemy.

Of the Mamelukes left behind in the tower, some were pardoned, some were mutilated by the loss of their noses, eyes, or ears; and some were punished still more severely. The rage of Djezzar was not even yet appeased. He embarked the remainder of his women to Cairo to be sold. He then

vented his impotent fury by cutting down the trees in the harem garden, which he fancied had afforded shade to their guilty loves, and against every object that could remind him of his dishonour. The very cats of the harem were destroyed, as having probably been witnesses of his shame.*

The political disappointments which Djezzar experienced, during the last three years of his life, and particularly his fruitless animosity against the Emir Bechir, added to the malignity of his already sour and morose disposition, made him indulge in acts of ferocious tyranny unexampled even in his sanguinary career. Human life became his sport. His leisure hours were employed in making out lists of those whom he destined for his favourite Balta—political delinquents, and people of the town who had given him umbrage of some kind, either by not at once complying with his wishes, or by venturing to animadvert on his conduct, or by forgetting to salute him as he passed, or by some trifling look or gesture which he construed into wilful neglect or enmity.

This mode of execution, however, at last failed

* *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, vol. i. chap. xiii.

to satisfy his demand for blood. The process of death was too slow. Latterly, therefore, gangs of victims used to be led out beyond the walls of Acre, by twenties and thirties at a time, and shot down by repeated discharges of musketry.

To express surprise that a populace whose feelings were thus daily, and even hourly outraged, did not at length find limits to their endurance, did not in fact rise as one man against the monster, and kill him as they would a wild beast, would be inconsistent with a knowledge of the dastardly and degraded spirit which too often animates the human breast, particularly in the East, where reckless subserviency is innate and customary.

On the other hand, even supposing that a few might have banded together to accomplish the common deliverance by a daring act of fatal vengeance, the argus-eyed vigilance of despotism would probably have forestalled the deed; for the Spy is scarcely less fatal than the Assassin. Again, such is the prestige of power amongst Orientals, that oppression, with them, is even more endurable than the thought of violating the sanctity of a ruler's person, by an isolated attack upon his life, and

rarely, if ever, did an Eastern despot fall from a blow directed by a single arm.

And thus it happened that Djezzar died in his bed. Under his pillow was found a soiled and crumpled piece of paper—his death list,—containing the names of those, upwards of a hundred, whom he had marked for execution, and which would have been scored off within the next few days. Rumours of the event soon got spread abroad; but no sounds of mirth, no words of mutual congratulation were heard in the bazaars. The relief was too sudden, too great to be realized. At length, when the certain news went forth that Djezzar was dead—a convulsive tremor of joy and gladness thrilled through the town; and Acre arose from its bonds—like Lazarus coming forth from the tomb!

CHAPTER XIX.

WITH regard to Djezzar it might be almost said, without a metaphor, that "he made a solitude and called it peace." Commerce, with such a development as it could procure, under the régime of one who pounced upon its profits whenever it suited his whim and caprice, and who at times would paralyze its operations, by the sweeping edicts of a rapacious monopoly, enjoyed a feverish and convulsive existence.

The violence of the oppressor and the reclamation of the oppressed, alike ceased at length, to disturb the fearful monotony of his iron rule. The casual and ordinary outrages which occasionally disturb the best regulated social system, waned and disappeared before the gigantic outrage which he himself so relentlessly enacted against the rights and liberties of those over whom he swayed. The

arm of the violent man was paralyzed by the terror his name inspired, and the wayfaring man at least pursued his path in perfect security.

That the sudden cessation of a tension so strained and unnatural, should have been followed by a period of irregularity and fitful excitement; that reckless spirits, whose propensities had been so long bridled and subdued, should use the first occasion which offered, to whet their ravenous appetites for spoil and plunder, were but the ordinary consequences and appropriate fruits of a tyrannical and brutalizing government. And thus, scarcely did a few weeks elapse after the death of Djezzar, ere the Mountains were infested with wandering bands of robbers, who openly carried their nefarious designs into execution, by levying exactions on the various villages through which they passed. Parties of disbanded Arnaouts, also, carried terror and dismay into the districts immediately bordering upon Acre.

Under these circumstances, the Pasha of Damascus, on whom had now fallen the exclusive responsibility of affairs in the south of Syria, hesitated not to call on the Emir Bechir Shehaab to exert

his power and authority for the restoration of order and tranquillity, by empowering him to extend his jurisdiction over the entire territory, both plain and mountain, which had been comprised in the Pashalick of Djezzar.

The summons was promptly and cheerfully obeyed, and the Emir not only showed himself perfectly qualified for the task imposed upon him, but by his zeal and success acquired a fame and reputation even at the Porte, which gave him a rank and influence, from which he never afterwards, for any considerable time at least, receded. An agent now arrived from Constantinople, for the purpose of collecting the effects of Djezzar, with the anticipation of finding hoards of treasure; which, however, neither his vigilant scrutinies and examination, nor that of Lady Hester Stanhope,* succeeded in discovering. He moreover held a commission to nominate a fit and proper officer to succeed him, and was instructed, at the same time, to consult the Emir Bechir, and to be guided in his choice by that Prince's knowledge and experience. Soliman Aga, who has already been noticed, as

* *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, vol. ii. chap. x.

having taken part under Selim Pasha, in the insurrection against Djezzar, at the time of his meditated revenge against his Mamelukes, was accordingly appointed to the vacant post of Governor of Acre, and Pasha of Ealet Saida. No longer restrained by the feeling of uncertainty which ever attended his tenure of power during the wily dominion of Djezzar, and calculating on the countenance of his successor, whose character and disposition he felt would afford no great obstacle to such measures as he chose to adopt, the Emir Bechir, during the next few years, had time and opportunity to carry out those designs which he thought essential for the stability of the position which he had so painfully and laboriously acquired.

Scarcely, indeed, had the new Pasha been installed in office, ere the busy work of discord, so often baffled, was again commenced, by Chiefs whose private griefs were magnified into public wrongs; and the Emir at last felt, that unless some vigorous steps were taken to subdue a spirit which was constantly converting the Pasha's divan at Acre into a focus of intrigue against his own authority, his whole life would be consumed in

ceaseless and unremitting contests with the restless factions by which he was surrounded, and who would continue to seek the sanction of a Turkish authority, so long as they could do it with impunity, for their selfish and ambitious views.

The Talhooks and Abdel-Meliks had written in terms of disparagement to Soliman Pasha, of the Emir's general conduct and administration. The Maronite House of Haazin had complained of a proceeding which he had just commenced, that of valuing the properties in the Kesrouan with a view to their more equitable taxation, as novel and unprecedented. The Druse House of Raslan, at Shwyfat, had just experienced a summary and severe retribution, at the hands of the Emir, for a hasty ebullition of temper on the part of the remarkable lady who now ruled the Macaata of the Lower Ghurb, and whose qualities may claim a passing remark.

To those who have read the preceding pages of this work which treat of the Druse religion, it must have been apparent, that the status and position given to females, amongst the Druses, are peculiarly characteristic of that people, and

perhaps it may be added, totally dissimilar to that enjoyed by their sex throughout the East. The Mohammedans, it is well known, regard their women as little better than slaves, and some of their theologians have even questioned whether woman has a soul. The Christians it is true admit them to a share in the consolations of religion, but, equally with the Mohammedans, view their intellectual pretensions with supreme contempt.

With both sects, their mental occupations range no further than the duties of the harem, and superior excellence in household arrangement is the highest meed of praise to which they can ever aspire. The Druses, on the contrary, by the very nature of their religious proceedings, invite and acquiesce in the influence of female superiority. In the Druse Holowés, the male and female Ockals, though, as a matter of form, divided by a screen, imbibe together the truths imparted by the reading of their sacred books, together sympathize in all the emotions which they call forth.

But it has been shown that these meetings, so sedulously abstracted from the vulgar eye, are nearly, if not quite as much, political as they are

religious: and when the assemblage of Ockals has been compared, and it is believed, not inaptly, to a Senate,* it must be borne in mind that one-half of the Senators are women. Not that all take part in the various discussions which arise, or presume to enter into the consideration of subjects from which, as a principle, it is as well perhaps that women should stand aloof; but still, there are female Unitarians who, partly owing to their superior rank, and partly to the merits of their own superior intellects, are allowed to express, and often do express, their opinions on every important matter connected with the welfare of their sect, with a clearness, energy, and decision, which often influence the general deliberations.

Indeed there are some Druse ladies now in Mount Lebanon, whose wisdom, tact, and discrimination, are so highly prized by their immediate relations amongst the Sheiks, and they too, some of the most influential leaders of the Druses, that no project would be considered complete, unless it had been submitted to their judgment and approval.

Endued with great physical, as well as moral

* See vol. ii. p. 260.

courage, the Druse women animate, and sometimes even by their example shame their husbands into deeds of courage and devotion; following them to the field of battle with persevering tenacity. During the last civil war of 1845, when the village of Ebtater was threatened by an overwhelming body of Christians, the Druses contemplated abandoning the place, and one of the principal Sheiks proposed to give the signal for retreat. "Do you call yourselves men!" exclaimed the wife of Sheik Kassim Abdel Melik. "Give me a tarboosh and sword, and I'll lead out the clan!" The voice of the heroine prevailed, and the Druses went forth to battle, and conquered.

Of this class of female Unitarians was the lady, an allusion to whom induced the preceding remarks. Sitt Haboos was the wife of the Emir Abbas Raslan, over whom she exercised that species of control which an ordinary mind not only submits to, but even courts from a powerful and vigorous understanding. Her mental superiority was so universally acknowledged, and, on her own part, so boldly asserted, that at last, as if by a tacit consent, the reins of government were placed fairly in her hands, and notwitstanding the presence

of several Emirs of her family, entitled by birth, and even by their abilities, to the position she acquired, the whole district of the Lower Ghurb, including the Plain of Beyrout, acknowledged her as their Chief.

Her abode, at Shwyfat, became the rendezvous of some of the most considerable Chiefs of the Mountain, who discussed in her presence, and assisted by her counsels, all the momentous topics of the day. Matters of civil and criminal jurisprudence were subjected to her direct and immediate decision, and suitors for justice, of every rank and station, were freely admitted to her presence, subject to the usual restrictions imposed by the code of Druse morality, on intercourse between the sexes.

All parties assembled in the grand divan, and successively stated the nature of their business, before a certain number of officiating clerks, who took depositions of the proceedings, and who, apparently, constituted the Court of Appeal. An observer, however, might have seen the eyes of the various spokesmen anxiously directed towards a certain mysterious looking curtain drawn across one corner of the room, behind which, from time to

time, a voice would proceed, interrupting, questioning, suggesting and awarding, according to the exigences of the case before it, with a tone of authority, that evinced a power accustomed to implicit deference and obedience.

All present confessed the influence of this Invisible presence, which, like an Oracle of old, inspired feelings of respect and awe. This was the Sitt Haboos Raslan. It would have indicated a mind more than usually exempt from the ordinary failings of human nature, if such an eminence, and such a long course of arbitrary power as Sitt Haboos enjoyed, had not in some degree inflated her with exaggerated ideas of her own weight and importance in the scale of public affairs; more especially when she could boast of having the powerful family of the Jumblatts entirely under her guidance and disposal.

On the other hand, the Emir Bechir, prompted no doubt by Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, who now began that friendship with the Prince of the Lebanon which so long affected their common career, used invariably to treat the Druse Princess with the most marked consideration, humouring her

caprices and eccentricities with generous forbearance, and continually sending her tokens of his good will and regard. The Emir most probably appreciated the singular properties of character and disposition, which enabled her to exercise a dominion so singular and unprecedented, and wisely, perhaps, evinced his approval and admiration of one, whose name might justly have been considered, amongst the Druses at least, a Symbol of Power.

But when, in a tumult which occurred at the burial of the Emir Mousa Shehaab, where Christians and Druses engaged in one of those indiscriminate squabbles which often occur amongst feudal clans, the Sitt Haboos gave orders to her Druses to fall upon and chastise the Emir's family retainers, for some alleged insult to her name and authority, the Emir Bechir felt that forbearance might have its limits; and resolving to punish the waywardness of a temper which seemed to acknowledge no control, sent and burnt her palace at Shwyfat to the ground. It is not surprising, that this unexpected act of rigour induced her to join, for a time, the string of malcontents who now began to throng

the newly constituted divan of Soliman Pasha at Acre.

In the year 1807, Gerious Baz ventured once more to attempt regaining such a degree of consideration, as might enable him to carry out the designs he still harboured for the advancement of the sons of the Emir Yousuf. He volunteered to plead the cause of the discontented Sheiks; and, under pretence of private business, made his way to Acre. The Emir Bechir no sooner heard of his departure from Deir el Kammar, than, judging of the real nature of his errand, he forthwith, in order to strike a salutary terror into the hearts of all who might again be disposed to enlist on the side of that intriguing Maronite, sent forces to Heittat and Ebtater, the residence of the Talhooks and Abdel-Meliks, and burnt their family mansions to the ground.

This stringent measure baffled for the time the calculations of Gerious Baz, and he returned shortly afterwards to Deir el Kammar. Upon going to salute the Emir, as though perfectly innocent of harbouring any designs against his authority, that Prince received him with such

marks of courtesy and consideration, that he felt assured his real sentiments were as yet undiscovered. Improving on the apparent cordiality which the Emir exhibited, to confirm him in his good opinion, and basely betraying those whose cause, as finally conducing to his ulterior object of restoring the young Princes, he now saw it would be useless any longer to espouse—he showed the Emir all the letters which various Druse Sheiks had written to Soliman Pasha complaining of the Emir's tyranny and extortion, and of which he himself, as the soul and centre of a contemplated movement, had been made the depositary; receiving them even from the hands of that Pasha himself. In the meantime, those chiefs had sought the good offices of the Emir Hassan Shehaab, brother of the Emir Bechir, and ruler of the Kesrouan, to effect a reconciliation between them and their offended liege.

The time had at length arrived, when the Emir thought he could effect a consummation which he had probably cherished in his breast for years. But its accomplishment required the greatest degree of skill and promptitude. He now proceeded coolly and systematically to put it into execution. The

presence of his brother, the Emir Hassan, at Ebtedeen, enabled the two brothers to arrange a scheme, by which Gerious Baz and the young Princes might both be destroyed at one blow.

Though Gerious Baz, from the nature of his political connexions, was living at Deir el Kammar, the young Princes occupied the Castle of Djebail, under the care of Baz's brother, Abdelahad. In order more effectually to lull all suspicions on the part of his intended victims, the Emir Bechir professed to have gratefully availed himself of the valuable information imparted by the letters consigned to him by Gerious Baz, and sent Howalies ostensibly to quarter themselves on the different villages occupied by the Talhooks and Abdel-Meliks; at the same time, he took care to inform those Sheiks of the manner in which they had been betrayed by their imaginary friend and patron, and secretly promised them complete forgiveness for their past disaffection, if they would join him in effecting the destruction of their common enemy.

Exasperated by the duplicity of Gerious Baz, the Druse Sheiks gladly availed themselves of an

opportunity to avenge themselves, and heartily entered into the plans suggested. Pretending to be flying from the Emir Bechir's displeasure, which the presence of Howalies in their villages strongly confirmed, the Talhooks and Abdel-Meliks, accompanied by the Emir Hassan, were to go on a visit of ceremony to the young Princes at Djebail, and implore their shelter and protection. The Emir Bechir, on his part, was to affect the greatest surprise, and even alarm, at such a step on the part of the Yesbecky, (for the recent junction of the Amads had completed the ranks of that faction,) and was to send for Gerious Baz to Ebtedeen, to induce him to use his influence with the young Princes, to make them reject the onerous advocacy of such a cause.

One fine morning in the month of June, the plain near Djebail glittered with the flash of arms, and resounded with the sound of firing. Horsemen careering about in all directions, shouting, discharging pistols, whirling spears, together with the rattling tones of the tom-tom,* announced to

* A small double kettledrum, placed across the saddle in front of the rider.

the astonished inhabitants of that town the approach of some unusual procession. As the tumultuous cavalcade drew near, two messengers dashed forward toward the gates, and hastily announced the arrival of the Yesbeck Sheiks, who had descended from the mountains to come and pay their respects to the young Emirs, the sons of the Emir Yousuf Shehaab.

News of the approaching visit was forthwith conveyed to the castle, where preparations were immediately commenced to do all honour to the expected guests. The Emirs hastily put on their holiday attire, the servants spread out the best silk divan, amber mouth-pieces were quickly adjusted to Damascus pipes expressly reserved for state occasions; sherbet, coffee, incense, rose water, all those delightful accessories in fact which conspire to make an Oriental reception so peculiarly gratifying to the senses, were put into immediate requisition; and it was determined by Abdelahad, the brother of Gerious Baż, who acted the part of Master of the Household, that nothing should be wanting to make a favourable impression on Chiefs, whose presence in those parts was so

unusual, that no doubt it was connected with some political mission, pregnant with important consequences.

At length the party arrived at the large stone archway leading to the tower, and the clattering of the horses' hoofs announced that the entrance to the castle had been reached. The attendants waiting below had, however, by this time discovered that all was not right, for, contrary to custom, the Sheiks instead of preceding their retainers had dropped to the rear, and scarcely quitted the bazaars of the town. To refuse admittance to the warlike-looking Druses, who had dismounted and stood athwart the doorway, was impossible; the cry of alarm, though loudly raised, was now useless.

Dashing up the stone staircase which led to the apartments occupied by the Emirs, who had not time even to effect a temporary barricade, the foremost of the assailants cut down the faithful domestic who bravely rushed forward to prevent their ingress. Quickly recovering himself, however, he continued for a long time a most desperate resistance, until finding himself overpowered by numbers

he escaped the sword of the assassin, by leaping out of a window upwards of sixty feet from the ground, and fell headlong on the marble pavement of the court below. He still survives at the village of Torza, in Bisherry. Abdelahad was soon a lifeless corpse. The young Emirs at once surrendered, and as strict orders had been given not to take their lives, they were taken before the Emir Hassan, who was quietly awaiting the result of all these proceedings outside the town of Djebail.

Ere that day's sun had set, the last that they were destined ever to behold, the unfortunate Princes found themselves close prisoners in the Convent of Deiraoon, above Djouni. A feeling of pity, it is said, seized the Emir Hassan, as he beheld his young relatives, and reflected on the miserable fate which was in store for them; but the orders of his brother were inexorable, and, notwithstanding all their prayers and entreaties for even the shortest respite, in the hopes that an appeal for mercy might not be made in vain, a red hot iron was passed over the pupils of their henceforward, sightless eyeballs. The solace of

domestic life was even denied them, to cheer their miserable existence; for the Emir Bechir resolving, as far as lay in his power at least, to prevent the possibility of fresh rivals arising in that branch of the House of Shehaab, issued an order, which was never afterwards rescinded, prohibiting them from marrying.

He himself, as it may be supposed, had thoroughly enacted his self-appointed part in the bloody conspiracy. At about the same hour that the Castle of Djebail had been violently possessed by the Yesbecky, Gerious Baz entered the private divan of the Emir Bechir, in obedience to an invitation which he had received in his house at Deir el Kammar, and which he readily accepted, as a proof of kindness and friendship; for the Emir had evidently, for some time past, been admitting him to more than usual terms of intimacy and confidence. All recollection of the factious opposition of his past life, he thought, had been extenuated if not effaced, in the opinion of the Emir, by the zeal and assiduity he had recently displayed, in revealing to him the machinations of his secret enemies; and Gerious Baz was, no doubt, rapidly settling

down into the conviction, that to blend his fortunes with those of the Emir Bechir, was the course most consistent with his best interests, at the period of life to which he had arrived—when care and respectability are more to be coveted than the allurements of a troublesome and uncertain grandeur.

His reception was everything that could be desired. The Emir even rose to him as he came in—a very great distinction. The interview was likewise strictly confidential, for no one was present. Sherbet, pipes, and coffee were duly brought; the most affectionate inquiries were addressed to the welcome guest, as to the health of himself and various members of his family, and the conversation was prolonged for some time with peculiar frankness and affability.

At length the Emir rose, and begged to be excused a short absence, which, however, should be but momentary. The next sound which saluted the ears of the affrighted Baz, and which issued from behind a curtain that dropped across the door of the divan, were the words, "Go in and kill that dog," uttered in a voice of thunder. In

another minute a gigantic black Mameluke rushed in, and seizing him by the belt, flung him violently on the ground. Ere he had time to struggle or resist, the knee of the African was on his breast, and his glittering knife buried some inches in his throat!

CHAPTER XX.

It was thus the Emir Bechir used to remove political obstacles. It may at first sight appear to have been inconsistent in a ruler, who has been described as having overcome more than ordinary impediments in his career, and whose master-spirit had baffled so successfully the restless machinations of the proud and ambitious chiefs by whom he was surrounded, to have condescended to the wary and circuitous measures above described, for the removal of an individual who had neither family connexions nor political adherents of any real weight or consequence, to render him formidable. But it must be borne in mind, that Gerious Baz had enjoyed a position which enabled him, while in temporary exercise of the administrative functions of

government at Deir el Kammar, to acquire the love and confidence, not only of the middle classes, but even of the populace of that town, most of whom were his co-religionists, and all of whom were pleased and gratified to see the homage and deference paid by the Mountain aristocracy, to one of their own order.

The generosity of his disposition and the openness of his character, which constantly displayed itself in various acts of charity and benevolence, tended also to create an almost universal feeling in his favour amongst the great body of his countrymen, and to give him a degree of popularity which well nigh counterbalanced the short-comings of his birth and station. It was thus that, although thwarted in his schemes of personal aggrandizement, though vainly endeavouring to raise the fortunes of the young Princes whose cause he had so zealously and enthusiastically espoused, he still had achieved a moral elevation almost equivalent in its effects and influence, to political ascendency.

And thus the Emir Bechir, well-knowing and rightly estimating the protecting elements which

slumbered around the head of his intended victim, within the walls of Deir el Kammar, deemed it necessary, in order to despatch him, to entice him into his own den. Events amply justified the precaution; for no sooner did the reports reach the Deir, that Gerious Baz had fallen a prey to the assassin's knife, than its entire population flew to arms, and demanded tumultuously to be led against the Palace of Ebtedeen. The flash of arms, however, and the muzzles of upwards of a thousand muskets peering over the battlements, significantly warned the intended assailants, of the probable result of such ill-timed rashness; and, after some hours of tempestuous and useless effervescence, the turbid seethings of the mob subsided.

If the anterior circumstances of the Emir's life had not been sufficient to show the magnates of the Lebanon, that a commanding genius had arisen amongst them, it now, at all events, must have become evident to them, that a Prince who could unscrupulously pave his own road to greatness by deeds of such despotic violence, was destined to achieve a sway and dominion which would defy the ordinary efforts of party hatred and disaffection.

The Turkish authority likewise, to whom they were accustomed to repair for sanction and support, in the hour of spleen and discontent, and in whose ready arsenal they were used to whet their weapons of treachery and discord, seemed at the present epoch to have felt the paralysing effects of so much vigour and daring, and Soliman Pasha himself dreaded to investigate the nature or impede the exercise of a power, which was thus boldly wielded by one to whom he was indebted for his own official existence.

The fame of the Emir Bechir had now extended through the whole of Syria. In the most distant towns his reputation had become known and felt, and his countenance and protection esteemed a safeguard and asylum. Ebtedeen became thronged with persons seeking his mediation between themselves and their offended rulers. Arab Emirs, unable to meet the ruinous exactions of their Pashas; Christians flying the resentment of a Moslem population; debtors craving mercy and delay; political delinquents guilty of some rash resistance to the heartless mandates of a local governor; all might now be seen craving an

audience of the Prince on whose breath it was believed their fate depended, (nor, indeed, without a cause,) for the Emir's support was now become as essential to the rulers as to the people; and circumstances daily tended to render his position more formidable and important.

In the spring of 1810, the Wahabees had penetrated as far as the Houran, after having sacked and pillaged Mecca. These swarthy Arabs, who certainly constitute the most extraordinary military republic in existence, whose hands are essentially against every man, and every man's hand against them, whenever prompted by hunger or a thirst for spoil, break away from the arid limits of their own domain, and spread, like devastating lava, over every region they traverse.

The Emir Bechir was called upon to go forth and meet these desperate marauders. The place of rendezvous for the mountaineers, was Tiberias, from whence, by crossing at an easy day's march, the "Djsr Binaat Yacoub," or "Bridge of the daughters of Jacob," to the north, or the Djsr Madjuma to the south of the Lake of Tiberias, any enemy occupying the vast plains of the Houran,

and advancing towards Damascus, would be taken on the left flank. The force under the Emir on this occasion amounted to 15,000 men. Soliman Pasha advanced in person from Acre with a strong contingent of regular troops and Arnaouts, and the whole army, when assembled, occupied 400 tents. The Emir commanded the whole.

The Wahabees, in the meantime, had been rather roughly handled by the Arabs Beni Sukkur and Anazi, who alone can rally some 8000 or 10,000 horse, independent of their camel force, which, though the slowest, is not the least efficient of their military resources; and news of the sudden retreat of the enemy arrived at the Emir's camp, before even he had begun to move. Another object, however, soon presented itself to the Emir's activity. At this precise juncture, and during the absence of Yousuf Pasha on the pilgrimage to Mecca, an Imperial Firman arrived, nominating Soliman Pasha to the Pashalick of Damascus.

In those days of arbitrary and ill-defined authority, when Syria was as little thought of by the European powers, as China, when the Turkish Sultan was as yet incommoded by Frank interference

in the absolute and capricious rule he exercised throughout at least the Eastern provinces of his empire; when Pashalicks were principalities, and Pashas often life-possessors of their offices, and even sometimes hereditary princes, it was not unnatural to surmise that the ex-governor of Damascus would, on his return from the Sacred Shrine, exhibit some reluctance to lay down the lictor's fasces in that Emerald City, which the Prophet had declared to be the earthly counterpart of the Celestial Paradise; and whose wide range of legislative control afforded such a tempting field to speculative and practical flagition.

The new Pasha, therefore, rightly judged that a little pressure from without, would not inopportunely or ineffectively accompany the verbal summons to vacate which he sent his colleague. The messenger sent to deliver the Firman soon returned, as had been anticipated, with the reply, that Yousuf Pasha would only yield to force. The Emir Bechir declared his readiness to serve his friend and ally with his life; and, forthwith breaking up their camp, the Pasha of Acre and the Prince of

the Lebanon advanced their joint forces to the suburbs of Damascus.

The suddenness of this movement seems to have somewhat disconcerted as well as unnerved the occupant of the Serail, for he immediately gave orders for the package of all his valuable effects, preparatory to a secret flight; while, at the same time, he assembled his troops with the ostensible purpose of making a night attack on the enemy. When all was in readiness for the contemplated movement, and as the soldiers were momentarily expecting a command to advance, it began to be rumoured that the Pasha, instead of presenting himself to conduct, or at least to direct the sortie, was making the best of his way towards the opposite gate of the town.

The soldiers no doubt thinking that plundering, under such circumstances, was more legitimate than fighting, made directly for the Pasha's baggage, which was being escorted along the bazaar on a long string of mules, and presently easing these animals of their burden, proceeded to divide the booty amongst themselves, leaving their Chief to make the best shift for himself he could. On

the following morning, the Emir Bechir, and Soliman Pasha, entered Damascus in triumph. While the latter assumed the reins of government in that city, the former arranged such a distribution of local appointments amongst his own sons, as might secure his authority throughout the widest extent of the Lebanon, and its dependencies.

The newly-installed Pasha could, of course, refuse nothing to the man who had twice inducted him to place and power. The Emir Emeen received the Pelisse of honour, as Ruler of the Kesrouan, the Emir Haleel got Djebail, and the Emir Kassim obtained the much coveted post of Governor of the Bekaa. After a short stay in Damascus, the Emir surrounded by his gallant Mountaineers, returned to Ebtedeen, where he received such a reception as the Easterns know full well how to bestow, on those whom fortune sometimes raises to an elevation which, by its very greatness, seems to silence hatred, and disarm jealousy.

For once, entire union seemed to pervade all ranks. The Emir now proceeded to adopt such measures as might secure his almost sovereign power. Two courts of justice were established,

one at Ghazir, and another at Deir el Kammar. Various Princes of the House of Shehaab were distributed in different parts of the Mountain, with such petty jurisdictions as might enable them to give full effect to the volitions of the central will, whose influence it thus became their duty, as well as interest, to uphold.

The Lebanon now enjoyed a repose to which it had been for years a stranger. The malignant spirit of civil discord had been exorcised, and finding no Turkish mind wherein to nestle and mature its foul progeny, wandered over the abyss, abashed and powerless. Soliman Pasha had neither the temperament nor the energy to arouse conflicting passions. Inclined to the Emir Bechir by feelings of admiration, as well as bound to him by ties of gratitude, he instinctively rejected the whispering venom which the scotched and writhing serpent of faction instilled into his ear; and it soon became evident, that those who would essay, from motives of rivalry or jealousy, to brave the Prince of the Lebanon, would have to enter the dread lists alone.

None however seemed anxious to try the experiment, and the Emir Bechir was left at last in tran-

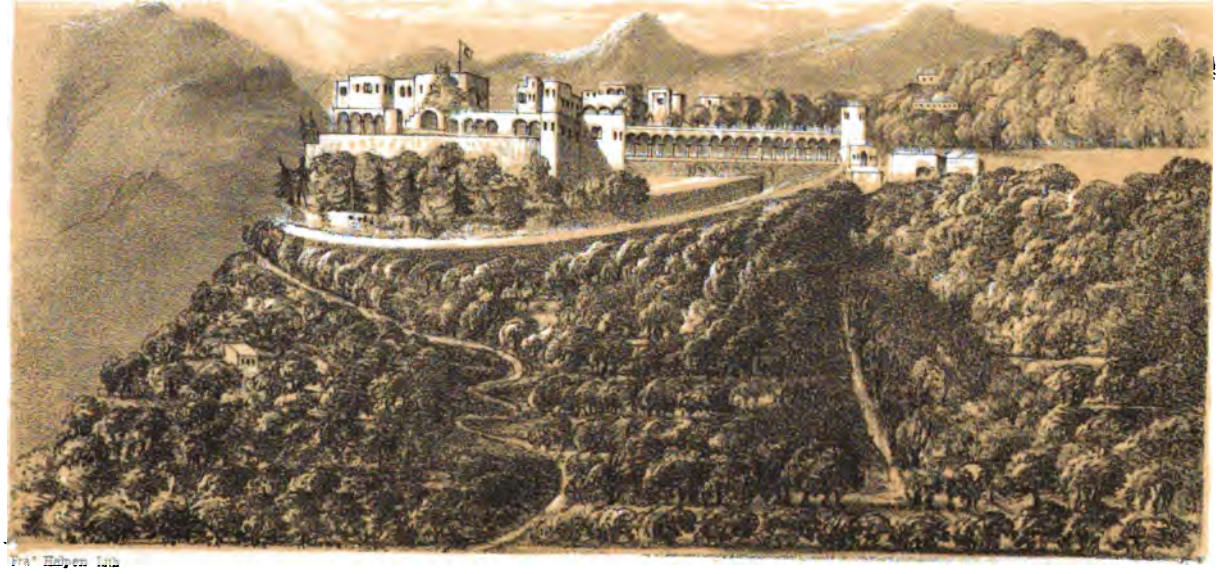
quil possession of his hardly earned elevation. Although, at a later period of his life, his sway over the Lebanon was more direct, and less subject to political conventionalities, than at this particular period, when if he had not hostile Chiefs to curb, he had, nevertheless, a powerful noble to conciliate, in the person of Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, whose family, and territorial influence, had raised him from the position of a devoted partizan, almost to that of a necessary and indispensable colleague; it is questionable whether his tenure of power was ever, in all respects, as enviable as that which he enjoyed, during the administration of the Ealet Saida,* (which, it has been already shown, included the superintendence of the Lebanon,) by Soliman Pasha.

Arrived at that period of his existence which the buoyancy of youth is apt to regard with contempt, as preliminary to, if not partaking of, the infirmities of old age, but at which, in reality, the mental, moral, and physical qualities of a healthily constituted man, attain their most vigorous, and consequently most useful development, the Emir Bechir, in his fiftieth year, found himself command-

* Pashalick of Sidon.

ing most of the advantages which render life desirable, not to say enchanting.

With ample revenue wherewith to exercise his love of hospitality, that innate virtue in the Eastern mind which sheds its charm alike over hut and palace, and half redeems it from the state of moral degradation into which it has been thrown, by the vitiating influences of those customs, laws and institutions which, in the East, so rudely thwart and crush the noble aspirations of the human breast,—with fame and reputation, which not only silenced and subdued the restless turbulence of the feudal confederation by which he was surrounded, but which rendered his name an object of hope or terror in the most distant parts of Syria; for even in towns ruled by Moslem governors, and from amidst the tents of the Arabs themselves, his potent mandate could save a culprit or secure a foe;—but more than all, with such countenance and support from the constituted Turkish authority on whom he nominally depended, but whom he virtually controlled, as enabled him to wield at pleasure, and with sovereign irresponsibility, the various engines of despotic rule;—he



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E B T E D E E N.

PALACE OF THE EMIR BECHIR (SHEHAAB LATE) PRINCE OF THE LEBANON

stood out in proud relief amongst his rivals and compeers, as one destined already to mark an epoch and signalize an age.

No wonder then, that he now began to think of raising such memorials of his power and grandeur, as should testify to the latest posterity his passage through the dark and troubled arena of his country's woes, or that he should seek to environ his name and race, with the prestige of such monuments of utility and splendour, as might secure to them the rights and guerdons of Dynastic greatness. In order to free himself from the troublesome, and perhaps dangerous, vicinity of the Druse Sheiks of the House of Abou Nekad who ruled in Deir el Kammar, which had hitherto been the seat of central government, the Emir Bechir had fixed upon an elevated site immediately opposite that town, and divided from it by a deep ravine, as a seat of residence. Though naturally barren and void of vegetation, except occasional patches of wild oak, the properties of its soil promised amply to reward the labour and care of cultivation, and accordingly, in a very short space of time, the grey and sterile-looking steep was made

to assume that air of artistic beauty, which throws such an inexpressible charm over the mountain ranges of the Lebanon. Successive terraces girdling the ascent in close proximity, following every wave and undulation of the ground with persevering constancy, and planted, according to the adaptation of localities, with the olive, mulberry, fig, and vine, but chiefly with the first of these productions, gradually subdued and changed the order of nature until they reached a kind of plateau extremely circumscribed in limits and extent, but in which the hard rock so greatly predominated, as to render any exertions for reducing it to cultivatable uses utterly useless, if not impracticable.

A height, however, had been attained, which not only commanded the noble sweep of the ravine in its full extent, as it wound its way in the distance and lost itself amongst the neighbouring gorges, but also a pleasing though distant view of the sea. The town of Deir el Kammar lay before it like an open map, and every movement of its population could from thence be scanned with scrutinizing nicety. This was the spot fixed upon

by the Emir Bechir for his palace. His taste for building once indulged, became a passion. For upwards of forty years, the process of erecting, amplifying, embellishing, went on without cessation. Master masons were put into requisition, not only from the various villages of the Lebanon, but also from Aleppo and Damascus, the latter of which cities likewise supplied those of its artizans most skilful in the pare and polish of marble, and all the varied arcana of highly-wrought mosaic.

The Meedan was laid out with more than ordinary care, and comprised a space on which a hundred equestrians could easily engage at once, in the national game of the Jereed. Stabling for five hundred horses flanked it on one side, and a range of arches beetling above the almost perpendicular declivity below them, with picturesque and striking effect, on the other. A flight of marble steps at the end of this noble esplanade, led up to the interior of the spacious halls and courts which crowded upon each other with profuse, though not very symmetrical, arrangement. The floors of some, the sides of others, blazed with the reflection of polished and curiously dovetailed marble, giving

the effect of painting, but, in reality, the result of patterns so rare and proportions so diminutive, that ingenuity to invent and handicraft to realize, must have both been severely tested, ere the pleasing, harmonious, and illusive combination was fully effected. To superintend, in person, this large and busy hive of industry which swarmed around him, and to watch, though seldom to direct or even to suggest, the alterations and changes which each successive day developed, as the gigantic structure slowly reared its massive and imposing front, was the Emir's constant resource, his favourite relaxation, from the long and tedious audiences, which the duties of his office compelled him to give daily, to the various state visitors and supplicants for justice who thronged to his Divan. With no attendants but his pipebearer, he would proceed to one or other of the numerous spots where the workmen were engaged, and, seated on a Persian carpet spread for him on the ground, watch the operations in almost unbroken silence. Or, if at times he ventured on a gentle criticism, his manner betokened that an undeviating adoption of his opinion was not required; indeed, the

master masons were the only persons who considered themselves authorized to adopt or reject the Emir's decisions, according to their own views; and it is said they frequently used this privilege in somewhat abrupt and unceremonious language, without, however, incurring the least displeasure. At length the mighty palace, which was to outdo all preceding attempts at edificial grandeur in the Lebanon, approached the term, if not of its completion, at least of its habitable arrangement.

The marvels of art gladdened the sight; the strength, breadth, and elevation of architectural designs, excited wonder and astonishment; yet one essential requisite was still wanting, and without which, the Emir keenly felt, that all this costly magnificence, however striking to the senses, would, in fact, be but little enjoyable. The sources of water which were to satisfy the amazing demand created by the magic power of Art, were few and precarious. It was determined that Art should supply the deficiency which itself had created.

At a distance of nearly three leagues, the river Suffa, after gushing from the live rocks beneath

the village of Ainshalti, with a volume and clearness amounting in its appearance and effect to magnificence, pursues its rapid and sometimes dangerous course towards the plains near Sidon. To make this bounteous gift of Nature available for the wants and necessities of his new abode, appeared to the Emir a bold but not impracticable idea. The Barook had been made to pour its sparkling and refreshing waters into the halls and gardens of Muctara; why should not the Suffa be summoned to contribute its crystal treasures in like manner to those of Ebtedeen?

The Lebanon was called upon to promote and accomplish an undertaking, which gave such rich promise of splendour and utility. Summons were sent to every district, for a given number of workmen, and the chief of each Macaata was held responsible for their appearance at a given time, on a given spot. One day's labours of the whole mountain population was to be gratuitous. The united energies of upwards of 80,000 men, it was supposed, would go far towards the achievement of the desired object, and what remained to be done, could then be completed, without any

ruinous encroachment on the Emir's pecuniary resources.

The system of forced labour, is well known to be a part of the feudal régime, and the Emirs and Sheiks of the Lebanon are certainly by no means willing to waive this important and convenient privilege. Still, however, it is only exercised on particular occasions, and those of apparent urgency. The collecting of stones from the quarry, or beams from the forest, for the purposes of building, is usually expedited by such means; and that only, in general, on such days as are given up by the Christians to repose and idleness. The chiefs rarely infringe upon a regular working day to gather their vassals in this kind of service, but Sundays, and more especially feast days, are unscrupulously put into requisition for these purposes. A meal, or an order for flour, is usually given to the working party, before it disperses.

In the month of March, 1812, the projected canal was commenced a few yards from the bridge which spans the Suffa, immediately below its source. The level of the waters had been taken, and marked in different places along the entire

space of ground through which it was to be carried, and, by this means, several hundred people were set to work at the same time. After several weeks of unremitting exertion, it was announced that the waters were slowly making their way towards the scenes, where their presence was about to create a change and revolution, so marvellous and enchanting. Amidst shouts and firing, with every possible demonstration of triumph and rejoicing, the glorious element was welcomed to the sylvan haunts, which were henceforth and for ever to bud, and burst, and luxuriate, in perennial beauty and fecundity, beneath its life-giving and exhaustless stream; and hoary Earth smiled up to Heaven—as touched and wooed by a celestial bride!

CHAPTER XXI.

THE far-famed artificers of Damascus at length moved in a congenial sphere, and a bath, unequalled in the richness and exquisite workmanship of its marbles, in the skilful adaptation of its intricate and labyrinthal windings, and the luxurious ingenuity of its boiling springs and sparkling fountains, soon sprung up under their practised hands, to complete the luxurious appurtenances requisite to Eastern tastes and habits, within the precincts of this lordly pile. Watercourses were soon carried along both sides of the ravine; on the side occupied by the palace, to subserve the fastidious demands of aristocratic indulgence, in the shape of summer kiosks and hanging gardens; on that along which stretched the town

of Deir el Kammar, to give increased value and importance to the extensive terraces of mulberry and vine beneath that town, and which, now bursting into a new existence, would yield to their numerous proprietors, a tenfold produce.

The communications throughout Mount Lebanon are of the worst possible description; and in most parts, the roads resemble goat-tracks rather than paths for human traffic. In many places, this defect is considered an advantage, and the Sheiks would deprecate rather than encourage any alteration, which might render their villages of easy access; a feeling peculiarly illustrative of the state of their social relations. The Emir Bechir, however, partly to exhibit a power bent upon removing all obstacles, and partly to facilitate the means of commercial intercourse between the Mountain and the plains, laid down a broad substantial road between Deir el Kammar and Beyrout.

Though formed upon the principle, and presenting the appearance of a long continuous staircase, winding up and down the sides of the declivities over which it passes;—being made of a succession of steps with flat intervals between,

them of one, two, or three yards, according to the gentleness or abruptness of the ascent, in order to prevent the earth from being swept away by the winter torrents, its commodiousness, for walking and riding, is far greater than might at first sight be anticipated; and, if kept in constant repair, would render travelling comparatively easy and agreeable. At the same time, this artificial structure, which has also been extended to other parts, requires constant superintendence to make it permanently available for the advantages it professes to secure; and if once neglected, induces a state of road far exceeding in all the horrors of painful and dangerous jerks and joltings, even the broken and rugged contortions of Nature.

In order to gain the confidence and attachment of the people, the Emir Bechir made it a point to be scrupulously just and impartial in his judicial awards, and to see that offenders were promptly brought within the arm of the law. The fraudulent or evasive debtor was made to support a certain number of mounted police, called Howalies, in his house; until he found means to release himself from this extraordinary expense, by payment of

his dues. Emirs of his own family were unhesitatingly exposed to this ordeal, on the complaint of the poorest peasant. In cases of violence, the means adopted to search out and bring the criminal to light, were prompt and persevering, and rarely did the deed escape its punishment. Numberless cases might be quoted of the patience, ingenuity, and success, with which, at times, a daring perpetrator was traced and followed to ultimate detection.

Two instances will suffice. A murder was once committed on the banks of the Damoor, which flows into the sea about half-way between Beyrout and Sidon. The body was found a little distance from the high road, and close to the point where it dips into the water, which at this part of the river is fordable. No clue whatever could be obtained as to the assassin or assassins. Inquiries were useless, investigation throughout the neighbouring villages abortive. The Emir, however, to whom nothing was more intolerable than the idea of crime committed within the Lebanon with impunity, would not give up the matter so easily.

Selecting two of his men, he sent them down to

the spot with pay and rations sufficient for their subsistence, but with strict orders never to leave it night or day; to keep alternate watch at night, and at all hours to contrive to overhear the remarks and conversation of all passers by. Days, weeks, months rolled on, nothing was elicited.

At last, towards the close of the eighth month, and about the dawn of day, two muleteers, urging their beasts along, close to the identical locality where the body had been found, and not noticing the watchers, who were concealed by the neighbouring bushes, amongst which they were sitting, mutually reminded each other of the deed they had committed there, and congratulated themselves on their good luck in escaping discovery. In an instant they found themselves collared, pinioned, and marched off to Ebtedeen. The same evening the self-convicted murderers were seen hanging on a tree, close to the scene of their exploit.

It may be supposed that, after such an example, to commit a murder in the Lebanon, and remain in it, was not a risk which many would choose to run; and speedy flight to distant lands, was the only resource left to him who raised a deadly hand

against his fellow man. Under ordinary circumstances, to put the sea between one's self and one's pursuers, is a pretty successful remedy against inconvenient and harassing intrusion; and accordingly, it happened once, that a certain huckster having been led in a moment of passion and resentment, to take the life of his antagonist in the neighbourhood of Beyrout, thought he could not do better than hire a boat from that port, and make the best of his way to the adjacent Isle of Cyprus. He arrived safely at his destination, and ere long began to drive a little trade.

This time, the difficulty with the Emir Bechir was not to find out his man, but to catch him, and this was apparently impossible, as he was living in another country, and within a Turkish jurisdiction. Restless and uneasy at what, with his highly-sensitive disposition in such matters, he considered a slur upon his government, he at last hit upon a device which at all events appeared worth the trial; and one bright morning one of his most active and trustworthy retainers left Ebtedeen, with secret instructions. The afternoon of the same day saw this confidential agent, to

whom the culprit was well-known by sight, lounging about the bazaars of Larnica, the principal seaport town of Cyprus. A rencontre, in the course of time, with his fellow-countryman, was the natural consequence of living in the same place, and great surprise was expressed by the latter at seeing him in those parts. The former at once entered into a long story of his misfortunes; he, too, had committed a murder, and was seeking an asylum from the hand of justice.

That a certain intimacy and friendship should spring up between fugitives and exiles so similarly situated, was of course to be expected. From friends they became partners, and each contributed his little all, to carry on business. Things, however, did not go on so smoothly as might have been wished; they over-speculated, got encumbered, and finally verged upon bankruptcy and ruin. Under these distressing circumstances, and after having mutually projected various schemes for bettering their situation, with no avail, the last-arrived Lebanite proposed that they should suddenly take ship and go over to Beyrout, from whence a passage could at once be obtained for

Alexandria, where they could again together essay their fortunes.

The proposition appeared hazardous, but when it was considered that their stay at Beyrout would at the most be for not more than a few hours, that so many months had elapsed as to afford assurance that their affairs were passed over and forgotten, and that, at all events, time would not be afforded for the news of their arrival there, ere they would have left it, the determination was boldly taken to try the experiment. They sailed, Beyrout was duly reached, but scarcely had they landed, ere the Mutsellim, through a medium which may be conjectured, got information of their presence, and, early on the following morning, the unhappy huckster, dangling his heels from a gibbet, paid the forfeit of his rashness, and expiated his crime.

It is not surprising if, under such a ruler, the arm of violence received a paralysing check, and ultimately ceased to trouble and disturb the social system; so much so, indeed, that towards the close of the Emir Bechir's long and vigorous administration it became a proverb, as it was in fact a truth, that a girl could traverse the whole range

of the Lebanon with a casket of diamonds on her head, without fear of molestation.

The people, it is true, groaned at times beneath his pecuniary exactions, the nobility winced beneath the withering severity with which he was wont to visit their political delinquences; but his inflexible love of justice, in cases affecting private faith and public security, palliated, in the eyes of his compratiots, if it did not redeem, his occasional displays of tyranny and harshness; and now that all vindictive soreness on the latter account has passed away, remains engraved on their hearts, a source of wonder and a constant theme of praise.

Though always so deeply engaged either in public affairs, or in the practice of the many exhilarating pastimes which a life in the Lebanon, to one who has the means of enjoying them, always affords, as to leave him neither the time nor the taste for distant excursions; yet there were periods, at which he was obliged to do violence to his exclusive partiality for these mountain occupations, and to mix with those whom a sense of his delegated power still forced him to flatter and conciliate. Moreover, his exalted position rendered

peculiarly necessary on his part, the performance of those indispensable requirements of custom and etiquette, which the habits and feelings of all Oriental populations so peremptorily exact.

Amongst the various peculiarities which distinguish the social relations of the Easterns, none is more striking to a European, than the manner in which they enter the house of mourning, and intrude upon the first sad hours of grief and affliction. Those sacred and trying moments, when the heart, blighted, seared, collapsed, turns away instinctively from all contact and communion with a world which, for the moment, it thinks of but with apathy and disgust—to seek relief in solitude and tears, and find a balm in the very sense and contemplation of its woe—are chosen by them, for an ostentatious though perhaps well-meant display of sympathy and respect.

Scarcely has the house been cleared of the dread panoply of death, ere it is crowded with relatives, friends, and visitors, thronging tumultuously to pour out to the bereaved sufferers, expressions of condolence and consolation. Keeping his tortured feelings in abeyance as best he can, the latter

now comes forth from his dreary chamber, to be publicly reminded of the sad ordeal he has just passed through, and to feign a callous stoicism which the secret promptings of his breast abhors, and the quivering wildness of his look belies. This proceeding, which is intended to convey a sentiment of fellow-feeling and regard, in the sanctuary of private life, is sometimes converted into a cold and formal ceremony of state; and on the death of any public officer of distinguished rank and station, those who hold official appointments usually acquit themselves of this mark of reverence to the memory of the deceased, by going to salute the chief authority of the town or district where the event has occurred.

It was under such circumstances as these, that the Emir Bechir, in the year 1815, was called upon to go down to Acre, to condole with Soliman Pasha on the loss of Ali Pasha Husnadar, the same who figured so conspicuously in Djezzar's memorable affair with his Mamelukes and harem. However accustomed he must have been by this time to the homage and obeisance of those by whom he was surrounded, of every rank and sta-

tion, and who naturally would be foremost to secure his favour and goodwill, the reception he experienced on his way to Acre, must have sensibly convinced him of his fame and influence, even in parts not subject to his jurisdiction.

On approaching Sidon, the entire population came out to meet him, while the civil authorities, mounted on their prancing steeds, and headed by the Cadi and Mufti, those important functionaries who preside over the awful mysteries of Turkish law and religion, formed an escort about his person, and swelled his retinue as he entered the gates of their town. Tyre, as his feudal array swept past the mute inglorious relics of that "once joyous city, whose antiquity was of ancient days—the crowning city whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth,"* — sent out her miserable contingent of official dignity, to be lost and engulfed in the brilliant vortex of splendour, pomp, and show which lit the path of Lebanon's proud Prince.

But the plains of Acre were reserved to exhibit the full power and influence of a name which

* Isaiah, chap. xxiii. 7, 8.

seemed to carry a prestige, acting alike on the people it controlled and the authority it obeyed. Arrived within two miles of Acre, the Emir's cortêge was met by Abdallah Bey, son of the late Husnadar, at the head of all the Turkish troops forming the garrison of that town, accompanied by the private household of Soliman Pasha, consisting of his Mameluke guard, his slaves, and eunuchs, and a multitude of the principal inhabitants, all dressed out in holiday attire.

The troops, drawn out in line, delivered a long and well-sustained "feu-de-joie," as soon as the Emir approached their ranks. The Pasha's irregular cavalry careered and wheeled about in mimic charges, discharging carbines and pistols, and challenging the mountain horsemen to a display of arms. A stranger would have fancied a regular action was going forward, from the dense clouds of dust and smoke which enveloped all the partakers in that gay and noisy scene.

Soliman Pasha, in the mean time, was sedately awaiting the appearance of his welcome guest. The bazaars, from the gate to the Serail, were thronged with a compact and anxious multitude,

eager to see the man whom all delighted to honour. At last the Emir passed under the archway which spans the seaward entrance to the town; but here the noise and hubbub of tumultuous exultation, gave place to that solemn and almost mournful silence, with which the Easterns are wont to receive their principal grandees.

To those who have never witnessed an Eastern salaam on such occasions, but a faint conception can be entertained of the effect produced by that remarkable obeisance. The European bow, even when accompanied by the removal of the hat, in no way conveys that complete idea of humility and self-abasement, which is portrayed in the portentous inclination, or, rather, doubling of the body forwards, by which the right hand is made first to touch the ground, and then simultaneously with the recovery of the erect position, conveyed in rapid succession to the breast, lips, and forehead; as though intended to express, that strength, feeling, speech, and intellect were thus voluntarily abandoned on the altar of a blind allegiance!

Though nowise bound to tender the Emir such a mark of submission, yet such was the respect

and awe inspired by his very presence, that most of that gazing throng instinctively bowed down before him, and even merchants seated on their shop-boards, stood up to salute him as he passed. Surrounded by all this exuberance of pomp, popularity, and state, the Emir finally reached the staircase of the Serail, and, lightly ascending the steps, was ushered into the grand reception room.

Moving slowly towards the Pasha, who advanced nearly half-way to meet him, the Emir knelt down to kiss the hem of his garment; an homage which the Pasha at once prevented, by taking him in his arms and giving him a cordial embrace. Seated side by side on the divan, they now entered familiarly into all the usual topics consequent on the termination of a distant journey, and the remainder of the interview passed off amidst the ordinary redundance of pipes, preserves, and coffee, which so agreeably relieves the formalities of an Eastern visit.

On the following morning, six noble-looking Arab horses and twelve choice mules were led into the Pasha's stables, an offering of duty and devotion, on the part of the Emir, to his rightful liege.

Nearly a week was spent in lavish and profuse festivity, and every day was marked by some interchange of gifts between the host and his guest, betokening the perfect friendship and cordiality which existed between them. On one occasion, the Pasha presented the Emir with a hangiar, surmounted with brilliants. A similar present was sent to him at his private abode, by Abdallah Bey, then a mere youth, but afterwards so celebrated as Abdallah Pasha.

On the day of his departure, the Pasha pressed upon his acceptance two handsome suits of clothes, and placed the Pelisse of honour on his shoulders. The same parade and ceremony marked his egress from the walls of Acre, which had distinguished his entry; and, as he crossed the gate, a general salute of cannon from the ramparts, announced the high rank which he held in the estimation of the Sultan's representative, and gave the crowning distinction to his splendid and almost unprecedented reception.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ovation which attended him on his arrival in the Mountain, was quite as imposing, if not more gratifying to his feelings, as his triumphant progress through the plains. From all parts of the Lebanon, the Emirs and Sheiks of the Christians and Druses, attended by their numerous and showy retinues, might have been seen winding their way through the deep glens and over the romantic steeps, which so strikingly diversify the scenery of its wild and picturesque ranges, and gradually pressing and accumulating within the spacious Meedan of Ebtedeen, for the purpose of congratulating the Emir on his safe arrival.

Such an event, occurring even in the family of the poorest peasant, is always made an occasion of

parade and rejoicing; and the pain and inconvenience of absence, though it be but temporary, is more than recompensed by the cheering custom, which draws around the wanderer, on his return, a constantly-increasing circle of his friends and relatives, until sometimes, several successive days are consumed in the joyous indulgence of mutual delight and happiness. The palace of the Emir Bechir, afforded ample space and materials for the most extended scale of congratulatory enthusiasm, on the part of the numerous chiefs who now came to greet his reappearance amongst them; while the profuse hospitality they experienced during their stay within its walls, rendered the fulfilment of this important part of the duties they owed to their Prince, a source of unmingled pleasure and satisfaction.

The reception generally commenced a little after mid-day, at which hour the Emir took his seat in the corner of his grand divan. As each party of nobles, after having dismounted, given their steeds in charge to their attendants, and ascended the grand flight of marble steps which led to the state rooms, arrived at this apartment, a temporary

stoppage would occur at the door, owing to the necessary removal of their shoes—a process indispensably preceding any interview with a personage of superior rank and station.

As soon as the door was crossed, and a sight caught of the Emir, a profound salaam, after the fashion described in a preceding page, testified the respect and awe with which the august presence was approached; while the former, rising on his feet, and with a dignified wave of the hand, motioned them to advance and be seated. A few steps forward would now be made with affected meekness and humility, while with folded arms and downcast eyes, as though wholly undeserving of so much notice and attention, the chiefs awaited further sanction, ere they could presume on taking a position so easy and familiar.

Again the Emir would renew the silent and graceful summons, but now accompanied with the words so untranslateable, and yet so soothing and expressive in the Arab tongue, "Adfuddaloo,* Emirs and Sheiks, adfuddaloo." With soft and noiseless tread, the latter would now proceed to the

* *Adfuddaloo* may perhaps be rendered, "Have the kindness."

cloth divan which lined three sides of the room, a yard and a half in breadth all round, and hastily arrange themselves according to their rank and precedency; but though standing on the very places where they were about to sit, another pause occurred, another posture of expectant diffidence would be assumed, until a renewal of the words "Adfuddaloo, Emirs and Sheiks, adfuddaloo," now sent forth with stentorian vigour and effect, half encouraged, half frightened them at length to drop into their seats!

Retaining a half kneeling, half sitting position, and still with folded arms, these haughty Emirs and Sheiks who, in their own Macaatas, were wont to display such tenacious pride, now humbly poured forth the necessary and usual expressions of felicitation, dictated by the requirements of etiquette, at such meetings; and the following phrases generally constituted the whole of the conversational intercourse which took place:—

The Emirs and Sheiks.—God be praised, my Lord, for your arrival in safety.

The Emir.—May God preserve you all.

The Emirs and Sheiks.—You have prolonged your absence from us, my Lord.

The Emir.—May God prolong your lives.

The Emirs and Sheiks.—We hope to God you have enjoyed yourself, and not felt fatigue, my Lord.

The Emir.—I pray God you may always enjoy yourselves, and never feel fatigue.

After having mutually delivered themselves of these amiable ejaculations, a long silence ensued, only broken by a few remarks which the Emir would make to one or two of the most influential chiefs present.

On these occasions, which often occur, (and the present description is applicable to them all,) sherbet and coffee are handed round to all, according to their rank; but each makes a salaam to the Emir before taking what is offered to him. No pipes, however, are introduced; the Emir alone indulging in that luxury, out of a long tube of jasmine wood, and a bowl of such dimensions, that it required an hour's smoking at least to consume its contents. After a stay of about half an hour spent in perfect silence and staid decorum, the chiefs rise up, and, after a multitudinous repetition of salaams and obeisances, proceed to the

outer court, and once more breathe an atmosphere of freedom from restraint and ceremony, amongst their vassals and dependants, who throng eagerly around them to learn the nature of their reception.

Two or three days of festivity now ensue. After a short audience each morning, similar to the one just described, only rather more stiff and formal, inasmuch as it is shorn of even the slight colloquy which then transpired, the real amusement of the day begins, in the arrangement and execution of the Meedan, that never-failing source of pleasure and excitement to the nobles of the Lebanon. The game of the Jereed has already been described in the preceding pages.* Sometimes the Emir will invite all his guests to accompany him in an excursion through the neighbouring mountains, to view a display of falconry. The whole country round is now in commotion, and village after village pours forth its contingent of peasants, to join in the joyous revelry of beating up the woods and valleys for the purpose of making the birds take wing.†

Two or three thousand men, and five or six

* See vol. ii. p. 279. † See vol. i. pp. 130 and 200.

hundred horse, used to be not unfrequently entertained and supported by the Emir Bechir in this princely style, for days together, independent of the numerous servants and retainers forming his own household. That one who by his fearless and energetic character had now maintained undisturbed possession of power for nearly ten years, and by his generous disposition so freely laid himself out to propitiate the good-will and support of the great aristocracy by whom he was surrounded, should have still been exposed to the changes and vicissitudes of fortune, may perhaps seem strange and contradictory; yet it will be seen, that it was not until the dormant elements of party feeling had again been instigated and roused into action by Turkish jealousy and arrogance, that the Emir found himself called upon to go forth once more and wrestle with his fate.

Notwithstanding the very marked pre-eminence which distinguished the Emir Bechir, attributable in no slight degree to his remarkable physical and moral qualities; but much more so, to the cordial and unqualified recognition of his position by the great Turkish authority, in virtue of whose nomi-

nation and appointment to the government of the Lebanon, he ruled—the dictates of policy and the exigencies of his position compelled him to resort to such further means for establishing his power, as might enable him to neutralize the troublesome, if not dangerous combinations of chiefs, who were ever ready to seek an ephemeral importance by an unscrupulous advocacy of the wildest projects—and to defeat the rival pretensions of the various claimants to the supreme authority, in the House of Shehaab, who, it has been seen, so constantly fettered and embarrassed by their ambitious movements, the administrative functions of their legal Prince.

Under such circumstances, it was not only natural, but indispensable, that the Emir should endeavour to rally round his own person, by a community of interests as well as by the ties of personal friendship, such of his colleagues as might be able by their weight and character, to render such attempts against his power, futile and nugatory. The large territorial possessions, the growing wealth, the feudal array of the Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, rendered his adhesion more than that of any other a matter of primary value and consequence to

the Emir's prospects. So formidable, indeed, was that Chieftain's sway and influence in the current of public affairs, that had it not been courted, it would probably have been enforced; and the Emir Bechir, when he called him to his most secret councils, and relied, perhaps too ostensibly, on his countenance and support, probably felt that he was not only acting upon a salutary expediency, but yielding to an inexorable necessity.

While thus briefly alluding to the ascendency obtained by this Druse Sheik, and which, in the eyes of the people, who are always quick to perceive the existence, though they generally miscomprehend the nature and extent, of these secret influences, had assumed such strength and notoriety, as to give rise to the common remark, that "the Sheik governed, the Emir only held the seal of office"—it may be as well to observe, as probably the reader of these pages must have already perceived, that throughout all the changes and vicissitudes which marked the state and condition of the Mountaineers, not only in their own intestine feuds, but in their political relations with the various foreign dynasties to whom they have been sub-

servient—the Druses, almost from the date of their existence as a religious sect, and more especially since the elevation of the House of Shehaab, have, more or less, held the destinies of the Lebanon in their hands.

The peculiar organization which exists amongst that remarkable people, the singular and characteristic fusion of religious and political functions which signalizes the duties and services of the most intelligent portion of their community, and which necessarily acts upon the body at large; the spirit of constant and unceasing anxiety, restlessness, and excitement—the unremitting watchfulness over all matters affecting the general welfare, engendered by that anomalous species of theocracy, by which their places of religious meeting are so many debating clubs—their devotional exercises but the prelude to eager political discussion*—have already been amply alluded to, and must at once be admitted to be the principal causes of their moral force and superiority.

At the same time, this healthy collision of sentiment, this generous sympathy of feeling, this systematic medium of confidence and fraternity,

* Vol. ii. p. 259.

whereby hopes are encouraged, fears dispelled, courage and devotion instilled and excited, whether to unite a party, or the nation at large, naturally result in an outward bearing full of manly vigour and determination, and in deeds of martial prowess, if not of heroism. One main cause, however, of the important and influential part taken by the Druses in the affairs of the Lebanon, is, that the seat of Central government is in the very heart of that part of the Mountain which they inhabit—a circumstance of itself sufficient, with their well organized means of communication, to place them on a vantage ground. For neither friend nor foe, bodies of men nor individual messengers, letters nor words, could pass to and fro between Deir el Kammar and any part of the Lebanon, without the fact being at once, and at all hours, brought within the crucible of their sensitive and scrutinizing vigilance and surveillance.

Although the prominent part which the Sheik Bechir took in all matters of public import, and the practical authority he exercised, did not so absolutely neutralise the decisions, and control the judgment of the Emir Bechir as many supposed, and as his almost daily appearance at

Ebtedeen might have implied—nevertheless such was his acknowledged standing and repute, his state display and profuse liberality, that his friendship or enmity was sufficient to create or ruin the fortunes of any individual who might have enjoyed the one, or incurred the other. For the Palace of Muctara* was also the centre of a wide and important jurisdiction, the scene of constantly recurring festivities, and of a boundless hospitality; with its courts and baths, its hanging gardens, its fountains and reservoirs, its capacious stables, and lordly Meedan; in its best days, even outvieing and outshining Ebtedeen. There, too, was a divan—a divan of Druses!—who watched and guided, averted or directed, impelled or checked, the tortuous course of many a current of political intrigue.

The Yesbecky, that Druse party whose component parts and characteristics have so often already been alluded to, had long viewed with silent jealousy and smothered discontent, the rapid and gigantic strides which the Jumblatts had lately been making to power and fortune. The haughty pride, and domineering insolence of Sheik

* Vol. i. p. 213.

Ali Amad, whose romantic courage and superior horsemanship had made him the idol of his clan, displayed at times with that utter recklessness of consequences, which so often characterises the possessors of great physical advantages, had insensibly excited the dislike and antipathy of the Sheik Bechir, who, with true Druse unforgivingness and pertinacity, pursued the object of his aversion with cordial and unrelenting bitterness.

That in a country where the demarcations of legal rights are often null, and always vague, there should be various means of annoyance and vexation within the reach of those vested with superior authority, to launch at their caprice against the stubborn and unyielding, is too evident to be more than intimated; and under a feudal régime, this oppressive exercise of irresponsible power on the part of the greater, over the less potent members of their caste, has ever been an inevitable consequence of that state of society. In whatever way the vindictive spirit of the Sheik Bechir was displayed towards Sheik Ali Amad, the consequences became at length so intolerable, that he resolved to leave a scene which, for the present, offered no field for

successful agitation and conspiracy, and proceeding direct to Egypt, there sought the favour and protection of Mehemet Ali.

Whether the Egyptian Viceroy had at this time begun to turn his attention towards Syria, and to indulge in those projects of aggrandizement in that direction, which he afterwards so ably realized, is not certain; at all events, the treatment Sheik Ali Amad received at his hands, was such as to warrant the suspicion that the unexpected medium of communication with those parts, which the Sheik's presence at Cairo afforded, was by no means distasteful to his wishes. Allowed the most perfect freedom of access to the Viceregal court, the Sheik generally contrived to be present on all occasions of state display and entertainment, and soon became distinguished amongst all competitors, for his skilful and sometimes daring feats of horsemanship.*

There can be no doubt that discussions occurred between him and Mehemet Ali, as to the state of parties in the Lebanon; and it is more than probable, that he greatly exaggerated on such occasions

* See vol. ii. p. 282.

the means and capabilities at his disposal for promoting the Viceroy's views, if such were developed; that he had so far gained upon the Viceroy's confidence, as to have obtained a conditional promise of his mediation and support, in the party dissensions which then threatened to disturb the peace of the Lebanon, may be fairly presumed from his language and conduct on his return to that Mountain in the year 1818.

The name of Shehaab, it has been already explained,* was ever a convenient, if not necessary covering for disaffection and revolt, against the ruling Prince; and it must be confessed there were always Emirs to be found in that family—one not at all remarkable for its aggregate amount of talent and ability—whose vanity and ambition led them to become the advocates, and generally the dupes, of the bold and enterprising Druse Sheiks whose real or imaginary rights or grievances they promised, if successful, to redress. The general conduct of the Emir Bechir, likewise, towards his relatives, by no means tended to create any feelings of sympathy or regard on their parts towards him.

* See vol. iii. p. 104.

Whatever portion of urbanity might have existed in his severe disposition, and however he might at times have condescended to conciliate and attract, by a courtesy and kindness of manner which rarely failed in its intended effect; it is certain the Emirs of the House of Shehaab (excepting, of course, his own immediate descendants), were rarely indulged with an exhibition of those amiable and redeeming qualities. Those of them, indeed, who by their wealth and standing, in any way threatened ever to be in a position to dispute with him the Pelisse of honour, were most unceremoniously disregarded, and lest their importance should be increased by his notice and attention—studiously kept in the background.

Without stopping to canvass the weakness or wisdom of such a policy, its indirect consequences may be clearly stated to have been, as far as the objects of its jealous supervision were concerned, to have made them ready and even anxious to engage in any measures which promised to vindicate their rights, or recompense them for what they felt to be unmerited neglect; more especially, when the possible result of their exertions would be, the dis-

placing of their haughty relative, and succeeding to his office. There were at this time three Emirs, who were prepared to enter heartily into any plans, which might afford them a chance of obtaining the honour and emolument, consequent on attaining the realization of their views and wishes; and scarcely had Sheik Ali Amad reached his home in the Arkoob, ere a messenger was sent to him, by the Emirs Hassan, Faris, and Soliman, to ascertain the cause and object of his return.

The reply of the Sheik, was sufficient to indicate that an understanding of some sort had been come to, between himself and Mehemet Ali; for he frankly avowed, that his principal motive was to procure a letter from them to the Viceroy, stating that they and the Yesbecky were firmly united. The Emirs, although they hesitated to compromise themselves by putting their seals to such a document, nevertheless assured the Sheik, that they were ready to make common cause with that Druse faction, whenever they judged the time expedient and advantageous for a common movement. Scarcely, however, had they begun to arrange their plans, ere they got intelligence, that their

designs and intentions were already known to the Emir Bechir, who, in unison with the Sheik Bechir, was making preparations to meet and thwart them.

Their only alternative now, was a speedy flight, which they effected with all possible despatch, accompanied merely by their own domestics, to the Houran. Though no longer in a position to take open measures for the accomplishment of their object, still the less obtrusive method of secret negotiation with various parties who promised to countenance their proceedings, was actively pursued; and emissaries were more especially sent towards a quarter, which if once declared favourable, would, they thought, beyond all doubt, put the seal and consummation to their most sanguine hopes and expectations. Indeed, without a prospect of support in that direction, they had probably never moved, or dared even to contemplate a revolution, which, unless sanctioned by a higher authority, they well knew would prove abortive.

But the Pashalick of Acre and the principality of Sidon had some months previously become vacant, by the death of Soliman Pasha, the Emir

Bechir's staunch and unfailing friend. The temporary interregnum which ensued upon this event, had been speedily brought to an end, by the zealous interference of the public treasurer to the Turkish government at Acre, who was a Jew, and who had, for many years, by virtue of his office, exercised an almost despotic influence over public affairs. Through his interest at Constantinople, Abdallah Bey, the son of Ali Husnadar, still a mere youth, was appointed to the arduous and responsible, though lucrative appointment, and with the title of Abdallah Pasha, proceeded to essay his hitherto untried abilities for administration.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE Jew Haiym, or as he was always styled, Maalem Haiym, was the son of an eminent Jew, who filled the post of "Kaatib" to several Pashas of Damascus, to which post Haiym, and his brothers Rafael, Yoosuf, and Manasseh, on their father's death, succeeded. "Kaatib," in Arabic, means scribe;* but the office confers more power than the name conveys. The principal "Kaatib" is not unfrequently both Government Secretary and Treasurer; and as it is usual for him to hold his office in the Pashalick, for life, whilst the

* A Kaatib is always known by an inkstand, with a small flat hollow cylinder pendant to it, about an inch and a half in breadth, and more than half a foot in length, for holding pens, stuck in his girdle. They are of silver or brass, according to the means of the wearers. Allusion is made to this portable writing machine in Ezekiel, chap. ix. 2.

Pashas, by removal or death were often changed—it necessarily happened that he was a perfect master of the business of the Pashalick, and possessed a complete knowledge of its revenues and resources; whilst the Pashas, coming from distant provinces, entered upon a government of which the key was in the Kaatib's hands, and were necessitated to keep them in their service, and to be guided by them.

Haiym had long acted as Kaatib to Djezzar, when the two provinces of Acre and Damascus were united under the orders of that Pasha. His services, however, did not exempt him from the cruelties which that capricious tyrant was wont to practise, upon all who incurred his jealousy or dislike. The name of Haiym, for some inexplicable reason or other, at last found its way into Djezzar's famous death-list, and that all-powerful Kaatib being abruptly summoned one day into the Pasha's presence, was astounded with the intelligence that his head was to be cut off forthwith. Remonstrance and supplication were all in vain—the tefeckétjies were ready, the "balta" glittered, and his doom was inevitable. The order for his execution, however, which was probably intended to

frighten him more than any thing else, was speedily recalled, and Djezzar not wishing to lose so valuable a servant altogether, mercifully leaving him his head, gratified his spleen and resentment by mutilating his face; and the unfortunate Haiym found himself obliged to part with his nose, an eye, and an ear, which were all excised on the spot. He was afterwards confined to the palace of the Pasha, where he attended to the duties of his office by day, and by night was remanded to his apartment, and locked up.

It is said, that one of Haiym's great merits in the eyes of Djezzar was, that, in writing despatches to the Porte, he mixed up respect and defiance in such a way, that they breathed submission, and yet showed the sword.* Haiym's sufferings were not confined alone to those above-mentioned. At one time he was condemned to be baked in Djezzar's pet oven, and actually suffered intolerable torments there, before he was let out. During the mild régime of Soliman Pasha, he exercised a dominion wholly undisturbed by such disagreeable incidents; and both his talents and

* *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, vol. i. p. 256.

resources, enabled him ultimately to become the virtual ruler of the province whose finances he administered.

On the death of Soliman Pasha, the youth and inexperience of Abdallah Bey, son of Ali Husnadar, strongly recommended him to the wily Jew as a convenient successor to the vacant office; and, in the belief and expectation, that his own superior experience and knowledge of affairs would naturally induce his young protegé to yield exclusively to his advice—and, perhaps, if plentifully supplied with money for the gratification of his desires and passions, to surrender the reins of government entirely into his hands,—he wrote in the most pressing terms to his most influential friends at Constantinople with these views; and, supporting his arguments with various other means of persuasion which he so amply commanded, and which to Turkish minds especially, are so irresistibly convincing, he succeeded in obtaining a Firman, appointing Abdallah Bey to the Pashalick of Acre and Sidon.

For some months every thing went on to Haiym's utmost satisfaction. He found himself

looked up to and courted on all sides. Complaints, petitions, addresses to the Pasha, all passed through his hands; and not an order of any sort issued from the Divan, without his inspection and approval. Imperceptibly, however, feelings of jealousy, which Haiym's enemies knew well how to foster and inflame, began to be raised in young Abdallah's breast, and the natural pride of his disposition, gradually increasing with the display and pomp of power which daily surrounded him, prompted him at length to revolt at a tutelage which he felt to be humiliating, and which his flatterers represented as wholly unnecessary to one of his talents and capabilities.

While under this embarrassment, and speculating within himself how he could escape the thraldom of one to whom, on the one hand, he felt himself under great obligations, and who, on the other, seemed by no means willing to part with a power and ascendency which he had been used to exercise for years—he was privately informed by one of Haiym's own clerks, that the Jew, indignant at the slights and insults he was now constantly receiving from the Pasha of his own

creation, was actually writing to Constantinople to have him removed. There was now evidently no time left for half measures. To have endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation by even a feigned submission to all the wishes of the Jew, would only have been to rivet around himself tighter and tighter, the chains of mortification and abasement. To make accusations against him to the Porte, for malversation, accepting bribes, or any other delinquency, in order to procure his dismissal from the office of public treasurer by an Imperial firman, he knew would be useless. The only alternative left, was to put him out of the way.

Accordingly, on a certain night, while Haiym was entertaining a select party of friends, one of the Pasha's confidential agents, accompanied by cawasses, knocked at the portal of his house, and demanded an immediate admittance upon matters of the greatest importance. At first, an answer was given, that the Maalem never transacted business except at the regular office hours; but on a fresh message being sent, that a brief but confidential communication from the Pasha was only intended to be delivered, the door was opened, and

a place on the divan hastily prepared for the untimely and unexpected visitor.

At the sight of swords, yatagans, and pistols, which suddenly presented themselves as the party walked in towards the inner court, the astonished domestics set up a cry of alarm, and Haiym hastily rushed forward to discover the cause of so much tumult and confusion. Ere he had time either to remonstrate or to retrace his steps, he was overpowered and seized, a rope was flung round his neck, and, after the process of strangulation had been thoroughly effected, his body was dragged like a dead dog through the bazaars of Acre, and finally thrown out to be devoured by the dogs, who constantly prowl about its walls.

This summary proceeding, if it released Abdallah Pasha from a temporary restraint, laid the foundation for future events, which for a long time continued to trouble him in his career. For the influential brothers of Haiym, at Damascus, furious at the treatment he had experienced, left no means untried by which they might satisfy their desire for vengeance; and it was owing to their relentless enmity and persevering exertions, that the Porte

was ultimately induced to take those extraordinary measures which it afterwards ordered to be carried into execution, for the purpose of curbing Abdallah Pasha's growing power and insolence.

If Acre was rid of a Nero on the death of Djezzar, in Abdallah Pasha it found a Heliogabalus. If the former inflicted on the wretched people who groaned beneath his yoke, the scathing torments of a furious and insensate cruelty, the latter no less exhausted their patience and endurance, by the heartless and long-continued indulgence of an extravagant and burlesque debauchery. But while the tyranny of the one fell with equal weight on all classes and sects alike, the mad caprice of the other, singled out the Christians as the more especial objects of its withering enmity and malevolence.

To relate the various modes which he selected, or to describe the malicious pleasure he enjoyed, in carrying misery and ruin into their families, would be beyond the power of truth, perhaps even of fiction. Such was the studied contempt which he indulged towards them, that he scorned ever to return, or even to notice their respectful demeanour

as he passed through the bazaars, and not unfrequently in their hearing, with uplifted eyes to heaven, and as calling the Creator to account, would exclaim—"Oh God! why didst thou create Christians!" Indulging without check or restraint of any kind, in all the vices and prodigalities of Eastern despots, his pecuniary resources were arbitrarily recruited from the coffers of any Christian, whatever might be his real means and expectations, who was supposed to have realized a little money.

In the midst of their mercantile avocations, and when perhaps most constrained by the exigencies of commerce, the merchants of Sidon, Beyrout, and other towns along the coast, would find themselves called upon to pay down several hundred pounds for the public service, which when collected would be transmitted to Acre,—soon to be swallowed up in its licentious quagmire. Several merchants at last, become nearly bankrupt by these repeated extortions, fled to the Lebanon for shelter and protection, under the Emir Bechir. Those who remained, lived in the meanest manner possible, and wore the shabbiest garments, lest they should attract attention.

A clean coat, or a festive party, were two sure signs of wealth, and inevitably entailed a demand for money. The consequence was, the towns assumed an air of sadness and beggary not to be described. Even to this day, men well to do in the world, and possessing ample means, in Beyrout, Sidon, &c., exhibit a meagreness of attire which, when contrasted with their station in life, astonishes a stranger. These are the last specimens of the state of society above alluded to, who having been so long accustomed to "hide their riches in rags," find the costume easy and habitual.

Next to the sudden appearance of a courier from Abdallah Pasha, the arrival of a Turkish brig or frigate, used to create the greatest fright and alarm. On the latter occasions, the bazaars used to be closed forthwith, and the people would desert the streets, as though overtaken by the plague: families particularly, in which the youth were at all remarkable for their personal attractions, used to remove in the greatest haste to the mountains, to avoid the scrutinizing researches of sensuality and lust. Virtue thus menaced could only save itself by a precipitate flight.

The sums frittered away in the construction of a summer palace in the neighbourhood of Acre, and for the laying out of its pleasure grounds and gardens, might have raised and fortified a town,—not for the purpose of preparing room for a generous and influential hospitality, or of keeping up the fame and prestige of Vizierial dignity, but to provide a place for the selfish gratification of a gross and debasing immorality.

One day, the inhabitants of Beyrout were thunderstruck by the arrival of a courier galloping in post haste from Acre, with orders to the Mutsellim to raise 300*l.* within twenty-four hours, for the Pasha's immediate use. Evasion was impossible. Some bethought themselves of secretly escaping from the town, ere the list of what each was called upon to pay, could be brought round. But this alternative was denied them, for the Mutsellim, well used to such scenes, had, with skilful forethought, ordered all the gates to be shut. There was nothing left for them now, but to disburse with the best grace they could. At last, in the midst of terror, anxiety, and alarm, the important contribution was amassed in Spanish dollars, and

after having been placed in a coarse linen bag, and carefully sealed up, was handed over to the messenger, who set out on his return as if the issues of life and death depended on his speed.

In the mean time, Abdallah Pasha, attended by his favourite Mamelukes, most of whom had been selected by him for their youth, comeliness, and beauty, had proceeded to his summer residence, there to enjoy a few days' privacy and retirement. On these occasions, his harem, although consisting of nearly two hundred females, used almost invariably to be left behind. Their presence would have interfered too much with the freedom of his movements, and inconveniently impeded the sportive sallies of his mirth and pleasure.

One of his great amusements now, was to spread his divan at the head of an immense reservoir, or tank, surrounded by sweet-scented shrubs and flowers, which stood in the middle of the palace, and calling his Mamelukes around him, to make them strip and jump into it; when, what with their lascivious movements, the noise of their uproarious laughter, their mutual tricks and pranks, and the splashing of the water, his

senses were excited to the highest pitch of enjoyment.

In the middle of this scene, the courier was reported to him as having arrived from Beyrout, and immediately afterwards, the bag of dollars was brought in and placed beside him. Overjoyed at this prompt compliance with his wishes, he determined to gratify his favourites by a profuse and unexpected "backsheesh;"* and making them partakers of the good news, he spent the next hour or two, in flinging the dollars by handsfull into the reservoir, to the intense delight of the Mamelukes, who, diving, and plunging, and splashing about in the water with greater energy and vivacity than ever, finished by sharing the 300*l.* between them! Such was the worthy, whose capricious elevation entitled him to palter with the destinies of the Lebanon.

Towards the close of the year 1818, Sheik Ali Amad, accompanied by the Emirs Hassan, Faris, and Soliman Shehaab, arrived at Acre, and obtained an interview with him. Pouring out their complaints against the Emir Bechir, with all that eloquence of speech and energy of action, of which

* A gratuity.

the Easterns are such perfect masters, and, appealing to the Pasha as the only person, who could save them and a suffering people from the tyranny and oppression which weighed upon them, they humbly represented that he could in no way conciliate public opinion and render his own appointment acceptable throughout the Mountain better, than by taking its government out of the hands of a Prince, who had long calculated on the blind and partial affection of the Pasha's predecessor, for the unjust exercise of his delegated authority.

The Pasha, whose age (for he was not yet 22 years old) and previous occupations, might be supposed not to have allowed him time to become particularly conversant with political affairs, was likewise reminded, that the office of Governor of the Lebanon, though, with the Sultan's sanction, hereditary in the House of Shehaab, was yet not confined to any particular branch of that family; and that it depended entirely on the will and option of the Pasha who ruled at Acre, and administered the Ealet Saida, to select and appoint whomsoever he pleased amongst its members, for that distinguished post.

Abdallah Pasha required no diffusive arguments to induce him to act upon such a representation. To make the Emir Bechir feel and acknowledge his dependence, perhaps to essay the weight and value of his newly-acquired powers against that able and experienced Prince—to show to the world at large, that he himself was not the pliant tool in the hands of more experienced agents which it had been supposed, and to impress the Lebanon with an idea of his determination to take a prominent part in its affairs,—were sufficient motives to make him anxious and well-pleased to seize the favourable opportunity which now presented itself, for a display of his Vizierial prerogative; and, after a few days' deliberation, the malcontent Emirs found themselves severally invested with a Pelisse of honour, and commissioned to instal themselves joint governors of the Mountain, at Deir el Kammar, as best they could.

Though the Emir Bechir was in a position, if not to have resisted, at least to have suspended the execution of this arrangement, by a direct communication with Acre, yet he wisely judged that the time and delay necessary to accomplish any nego-

tiations, if he remained at Ebtedeen while the new governors were absolutely approaching to take possession of their posts, would lead to a complication of affairs which might probably terminate in a hostile collision between rival parties, who only waited an excuse to show their mutual enmity. He no doubt felt also, that a ready submission and implicit obedience on his part to the commands of his youthful liege, would, by flattering his pride and vanity, go far towards opening the way to ultimate reconciliation. Accompanied, therefore, by the Sheik Bechir and a few attendants, he quietly sought his way to that unfailing sanctuary for state defaulters and political aspirants—the interminable but hospitable Houran.*

As this step was only intended to be the immediate prelude to a personal appeal to Abdallah Pasha, his stay in those parts was not long. Permitting sufficient time to elapse to allow of the full effects of the recent change being seen, and

* The Houran is that wide district which, stretching away to the south of Damascus, extends to the banks of the Euphrates and the confines of Southern Arabia. It is inhabited by powerful tribes of wandering Arabs, whose tents afford a safe and inviolable asylum to all who seek their shelter and protection.

which he felt confident would materially strengthen his demand for restitution, the Emir, still accompanied by the Sheik Bechir, proceeded to Acre, and at once obtained the meeting which he sought. The Pasha received him with a degree of warmth and cordiality, which clearly evinced, that no motives of personal dislike, at least, had instigated his late proceedings; and with no great difficulty yielded to the urgency of the Emir's respectful remonstrance, against a mark of displeasure, which he declared himself wholly unconscious of deserving.

The remembrance of their former friendship, the celebrity of the Emir's past career, the common voice, that none save him was capable of conducting the affairs of the Mountain, the wisdom, prudence, and loyalty of his present procedure; and, perhaps, as much as all, the impressive and highly imposing effect produced by his personal appearance, manners, and address, bespeaking him to be "every inch a Prince,"—all conspired to enlist Abdallah Pasha's interest and sympathy in his behalf; and he did not long hesitate to revoke a decree which, he admitted, had been extorted from

him in an hour of ill-judged haste, and immature reflection. He never repeated the imprudence, and to the last hour of his rule in Syria, he always supported the Emir to the utmost of his power, and amply experienced in return, the benefits of his friendship and regard.

The prospects of the rival Emirs had, in the mean time, been anything but flattering. A general feeling seemed to have pervaded the Mountain, that such a state of things could only be temporary; and, notwithstanding the perfect legality of their position, their reception had been cold and dubious. If the lofty towers of Ebtedeen which daily burst upon their view, had not been sufficient to create strange misgivings within their breasts, as to the stability and duration of their present exaltation; the meagre state and parade which attended their official receptions, by painfully reminding them of the inferior consideration in which they were held, as compared with their mighty relative, must have made them perceive the insignificance of their pretensions, and shown them the probability of their soon being obliged to relinquish their precarious grandeur.

Indeed, no sooner was it known that the Emir Bechir had been reinstated, and was returning to the Mountain, than they hastened at once to profess their repentance, and going forth from Deir el Kammar to meet him, tendered their allegiance on the plains of Sumkaneea. The Emir, without criticising too closely the sincerity of these professions, accepted their proffered excuses; and perhaps not without a feeling of pity and contempt, allowed them the privilege of resuming their original obscurity, without remark or molestation. Again the Lebanon poured forth her nobles and their vassals in one continuous flow, to greet their restored Prince; and with such apparent zeal and unanimity, that it is said, Abdallah Pasha himself expressed his astonishment at an enthusiasm, which seemed fully to belie the reports and accusations to which he had lent so prone an ear.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Emir Bechir had obtained his appointment, without having to perform some necessary conditions dependent thereon, or that Abdallah Pasha had not been fully alive to the opportunity presented to him by the Emir's condition, for obtaining re-

plenished coffers. Events which soon after occurred in the Northern parts of the Lebanon, too clearly showed that the ordinary process of taxation had been meddled with, and that some important demands, originating in some quarter or other, had been enforced upon the people. The inhabitants of Djebail and Batroon openly took up arms against the Emir's Howalies, and drove them beyond the precincts of their districts. The spirit of disaffection seemed to be spreading, and promised to become general.

This was the moment chosen by the Emirs, who but a short time previously had vainly essayed their fortunes under the patronising sanction of their lawful Turkish liege, to try their individual efforts for attaining the rule of the Lebanon; and, to the surprise of all, the Emirs Hassan, Faris, and Soliman Shehaab, headed in person the insurgent forces, A.D. 1820. The Emir Bechir lost no time in proceeding to Djebail to punish and chastise the rebels, while Sheik Hamond Abou Nekad was ordered to attack the village of Hadet, where stood the dwelling places of the Emirs, now occupied by their families. After a determined resistance on

the part of the feudal retainers, who rallied to protect the palaces of their absent lords, the Druse Sheik succeeded in making himself master of them all, and gave them over to be plundered by his Druses.

Sheik Hamoud, pursuing his advantage, and anxious to join the Emir, proceeded to the Dog river, but was there met by the Emir Soliman, who had forestalled him in the possession of that important point, and easily prevented his further progress. The Emir had by this time encamped in the plains about Djebail, and anxious to try the effects of remonstrance and persuasion with the disaffected population before proceeding to extremities, positively forbade his soldiers from firing on their advanced parties. This forbearance only tended to encourage their audacity, and drawing closer and closer to the Emir's position, they harassed it by a well-directed fire.

Without waiting for instructions, the Emir's forces, no longer able to endure such insolence, broke from their quarters, and, engaging in a regular action, which lasted for several hours, ultimately succeeded in defeating and dispersing the insur-

gents in all directions. Several prisoners were taken and brought before the Emir, who, with singular clemency, immediately ordered them to be dismissed. The three Emirs, upon finding the malcontents subdued and their own hopes frustrated, made good their retreat to the east of Damascus, where they were afterwards joined by another of their relations, the Emir Abbas.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE contiguity of the Pashalicks of Acre and Damascus, not unfrequently induced a collision and misunderstanding between the Turkish Pashas of those provinces; especially when these dignitaries were mutually bent upon upholding what they conceived to be points of honour. The Mountains of Naplouse which, strangely enough, considering their locality, come within the jurisdiction of the former of these Pashalicks, are peculiarly open to the influence and sway of the latter. Indeed, during the successive administrations of Daher and Djezzar, the former of whom was in a measure independent, while the latter united the two Pashalicks under his command, the principles of deference, and even of dependence,

which actuated the various chiefs who occupy those ranges, in their relations with the Vizier at Acre, had almost increased into an habitual feeling.

It is, therefore, neither to be wondered at, on the one hand, that Derweesh Pasha, shortly after his appointment to Damascus, should have endeavoured to recover the legitimate influence of his Pashalick in that quarter; nor that Abdallah Pasha should have been inclined to view the assertion of claims which had lain so long dormant, as an innovation. Without endeavouring to trace and specify the various stages in a quarrel which ultimately resulted in an appeal to arms, it will be sufficient to remark its bearings upon the Prince of the Lebanon who, nominally holding a power emanating in a greater or less degree from one and the other of those Turkish Pashas, now found himself courted and flattered by both.

For notwithstanding the success of his appeals to Constantinople, chiefly owing to a profuse expenditure in the way of bribes to the requisite authorities at the Porte, by Abdallah Pasha's implacable enemies, the Haiyms,—the Pasha of Damascus

clearly saw that any attempts on his part to subdue his rival, would probably be useless, without he could obtain the assistance and co-operation of the Emir Bechir. To attain this end, therefore, he sent repeated letters to that Prince, containing the most lavish promises of remuneration and reward, to induce him to espouse his cause, and particularly holding out to him that most irresistible of all temptations to a ruler of the Lebanon—the permanent government of Bellad Baalbec and the Bekaa.

The Pasha of Acre, on his part, was not less zealous in reminding the Emir of the tried and ancient friendship which existed between them, and of urging him by the various motives of affection and allegiance, to be faithful to his interests. The Emir was not long in determining which course to pursue, and Derweesh Pasha soon discovered, that the Lebanon was to prove an additional obstacle in his path to the vindication of his rights, and the gratification of his resentment. Nothing daunted, the latter boldly pursued his career of hostilities, and no wonder—Firmans, troops, Pashas, all were accumulating at his back. The Pashas

of Diarbecr, Adana, Aleppo, and four other officers of equal rank were, by order of the Porte, marching to his support.

Nothing was wanting to complete his plans, but the means of sowing division in the Lebanon. This, fortunately for him, was also most opportunely, at this moment, within his reach and means. The Emirs Abbas, Faris, and Soliman Shehaab, again volunteered their patriotic exertions for the accomplishment of this desirable consummation, and again grasped at a visionary installation at Deir el Kammar. Exercising his undoubted prerogative, Derweesh Pasha removed the Emir Afendy Shehaab from the government of Rascheya, in the Anti-Lebanon—a post which had for centuries past been hereditarily held by one of the branches of the House of Shehaab—and conferred it on his ambitious protégés, ordering them to move on that town with a large body of troops, to maintain their newly-acquired dignity.

It required no great amount of foresight in the Emir Bechir to perceive, that the government of Rascheya thus conferred, was merely intended as an instalment of that of the Lebanon itself.

Launching, therefore, with characteristic vigour into a contest which could no longer be averted; while on the one side he summoned all his feudatories, both Druse and Christian, with their contingents, to rally round his standard—he despatched letters to Acre, exhorting Abdallah Pasha to lose no time in advancing with all his disposable troops towards the Anti-Lebanon, for the purpose of checking at once the hostile demonstration which had been made in that direction, and promising him a prompt and efficient co-operation.

Though the forces now collected about Rascheya were not very considerable—being about 6000 on one side, and 3000 on the other—the contest which ensued between the two parties was not the less severe; and the Turkish troops, profiting by the naturally escarped situation of the town they were defending, offered a determined and gallant resistance to the repeated attacks, and vastly superior numbers of the Mountaineers. At length, however, the enemy having penetrated the valleys which in some measure circumvent Rascheya, the Emirs, contemplating the probability of their retreat being entirely intercepted, thought it expe-

dient to evacuate their position; and, crest-fallen and dispirited, again deplored their malignant star.

The Damascenes, frightened and dismayed, made the most hurried preparations to withstand a siege, never doubting but that the Emir would endeavour to effect a triumphal entry into their city. The Emir, however, content for the present with having humbled his adversary, returned to Ebtedeen, where the most extravagant marks of rejoicing, continued for many days and nights to be displayed. War songs were sung, and verses composed, to celebrate this decisive victory, which first procured for him a sobriquet by which he was ever after familiarly called, that of "Abou Saad," or "Father of good fortune." Abdallah Pasha also hastened to send him testimonials of his gratitude, by forwarding costly presents to himself and his sons.

Almost simultaneously with the news of this disastrous defeat, Derweesh Pasha received an Imperial Firman appointing him Pasha of Damascus and Sidon. Concluding that the Emir Bechir would not fail of yielding that obedience to the

Mushir of Ealet Saida, which he had refused to the simple Pasha of Damascus, he immediately sent this important document to Ebtedeen, with a letter summoning him to unite the Mountain forces with the Turkish army, in an onward move on Acre. The Emir merely forwarded the letter to Abdallah Pasha, and dismissed the messengers of Derweesh Pasha without an answer. The latter now recommenced offensive operations, by directing a body of troops to march upon the Naplousians, then in open revolt. On their arrival on the banks of the Jordan, however, they found the bridges of Djsr Madjuma and Djsr Binaat Yacoob already occupied by the Mountaineers, and for the moment suspended their march.

The Emir Bechir now went in person to Acre, in the hopes of being able to instil sentiments of moderation into the mind of Abdallah Pasha, and of inducing him to suspend, for a time at least, his intemperate and rash proceedings; for the state of the quarrel between the two Pashas had materially altered its aspect, since the existence of the Firman above alluded to; and a further continuance of hostilities, on the part of the Pasha of Acre

and the Prince of the Lebanon, in the face of that Imperial edict, would necessarily place them in the position of rebels against the Sultan himself. Turning a deaf ear to all remonstrances, Abdallah Pasha insisted not only on assembling all his disposable forces, but on marching upon and besieging Damascus itself.

The Emir Bechir, not willing to desert his friend at this critical juncture, generously determined to share his fortune, and boldly undertook to carry out all his designs. On the 26th of May, 1821, the main body of the Mountaineers, commanded by the Emir in person, appeared before the village and gardens of Muzzy, immediately adjoining the walls of Damascus. The troops which Derweesh Pasha had to oppose to this unexpected demonstration, whatever their courage, were not sufficient in numbers, to resist the Emir's attack; and though they maintained a vigorous resistance for some hours, in the difficult ground where they were placed, and ably defended themselves behind the walls of various gardens and orchards on the scene of action; they were ultimately compelled to give way, and abandon the

further defence of the city, to the exertions of its own citizens.

The latter, panic-struck and terrified on hearing the cries and shouts of the enemy drawing nearer and nearer, closed the gates even on their own party, and abandoned them to their fate. Derweesh Pasha, however, more humane and considerate, allowed his beaten troops a retreat within the court of Serail, where they arrived towards the close of the evening, in the utmost disorder and confusion. At the same time, he loudly complained that his ill-success had been occasioned by treason, and few of his chiefs, as they appeared before him, escaped abuse and malediction.

"Are these wounds a proof of treason?" indignantly exclaimed Sheik Nusradeen Amad, pointing to his tattered and bloody clothes, on hearing the word "traitor" harshly applied to him. Indeed, the valour displayed by this heroic Druse had well sustained that day the glory and reputation of his House and name. So numerous had been the personal combats in which he had engaged, so desperate his onslaughts, that his bloody hand at last clasped convulsively the handle of his sword, and

it was not until it had been repeatedly plunged into warm water, that the spasmodic contraction of the fingers was allayed. Disdaining to remain an hour longer in the service of one who so heartlessly requited his devoted services, he hastily bathed his wounds in arrack,* and proceeded towards the North.

For from that direction, Mustafa Pasha, the newly-appointed Seraskier of the Turkish army in Syria, was rapidly advancing with the forces of four Pashalicks, to subdue the rebellious Governor of Acre. The Shehaab Emirs also proceeded thither to offer him their allegiance, and interest him in their claims. On arriving at Damascus, the Seraskier wrote to the Emir Bechir to inform him that he was commissioned by the Sultan to support the just rights of Derweesh Pasha, and ordering him to dismiss his troops, requested his personal attendance at the Serail of the city. The Emir briefly replied, that had the Seraskier himself been named to the united Pashalicks of Damascus and Acre, he should have received his immediate obedience; but that he

* *Arrack* is an ardent spirit, like gin.

was not prepared so suddenly to turn round and befriend a cause which he had hitherto done his utmost to overthrow, or to desert a patron to whom he was bound by the strongest ties of friendship and gratitude.

In fact, the Emir Bechir, who, in this instance at least, abjured an uncertain or vacillating line of conduct, had made up his mind to stand or fall with Abdallah Pasha: and it reflects highly on his chivalrous sense of honour, that even when everything appeared to combine against their common hopes, he refused to separate his own fortunes from those of one, who in his prosperity, had ever extended towards him his confidence and support. It is probable that he calculated too much on the unanimity and devotion of the feudal chiefs, who had, as yet, displayed such apparent sympathy in his political predilections; and having been thus far successful, anticipated a triumphant termination to his present contest. It is not impossible likewise that he felt reluctant, by a too ready submission, to place himself unreservedly in the hands of Mustafa Pasha, who, however he might have accepted and welcomed his adhesion, would have

probably endeavoured either to effect his deposition, or so to embarrass his government by a covert encouragement to the designs of faction, as to render his tenure of power uncertain and precarious.

His prospects, at all events, became daily more unpromising. The Amads, sanctioned by the orders of Mustafa Pasha, were already engaged in their congenial and hereditary vocation of plundering the Bekaa, and revelled with signal delight and satisfaction amongst the well-stored granaries of the Emir Bechir. The Turkish army, amounting to 12,000 men, was fast concentrating in the same district; and at the central position of Ub-Elias, the Pashas awaited for a time, such allegiance from the Mountain Chiefs, as the influence of their presence, or their secret negotiations might obtain. The Emirs Hassan and Soliman Shehaab were appointed to the place of the Emir, declared vacant by that Prince's contumacy, and were invested by Mustafa Pasha with the Pelisse of honour.

It was at this juncture, that Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, by whatever motives influenced, made his appearance at the Turkish camp, and proposed a

measure, which he declared, would be more conducive to the public interests, and which he undertook upon his own responsibility, to render acceptable to all parties in the Mountain. This was, that the Emir Bechir should voluntarily retire from his office, and that the Emir Abbas should be appointed Governor of the Lebanon in his stead. The Emir himself had previously been made privy to this arrangement, and though bitterly accusing the Sheik Bechir, for not fearlessly continuing that support, which he had hitherto extended to their common views, had at last consented to accede to all its stipulations. Soon after the news of these proceedings became publicly known, the Druse Sheiks came down unanimously to salute the Pashas, and the Emir Bechir descended to the Pine-wood, near Beyrout.

The Turkish army now moved on to commence the siege of Acre. The Emir Abbas proceeded to Deir el Kammar; the Mountaineers were permitted to retire severally to their own homes, and the Emir Bechir, unwilling to remain a fugitive in a land where he had ruled with almost sovereign sway, took the bold determination of seeking an

asylum with Mehemet Ali. Towards the close of the year 1821, the Emir landed at Damietta, and immediately notified his arrival to the Viceroy, with a statement of his hopes and wishes. The latter, by no means ill-pleased at the presence of such a guest, hastened to send him a messenger, with an invitation to come to Cairo, where he promised he should experience every possible attention and hospitality.

Such a cordial reception, flattering as it must have been to the Emir Bechir, was nothing more than he had anticipated, or indeed had reason to expect. For the proceedings of Mehemet Ali for several years past, had all tended to evince a disposition on his part, to seize every opportunity which might present itself, for extending his dominion beyond the limits of that province, which partly by intrigue, and partly by force, he had succeeded in placing beneath his despotic sway.

The successful excursions he had made against the Wahabees, the desecrators of the Prophet's shrine, had not only enlisted the sympathies of all true Mussulmen in his behalf, and raised their best

feelings of gratitude, but had obtained for him a name and reputation at the Porte, which, in its ignorance of the secret motives which had inspired such apparent religious zeal and enthusiasm, and instigated such redoubtable activity, had made it anxious to secure the benefits of his able services, by extending the sphere of their operations; and when the Sultan conferred the Pashalick of the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina on the bold and courageous son of Mehemet Ali, he, no doubt, thought he was signally contributing to the welfare of his subjects, and the safety of his Empire.

The closer relations which, consequently on these events, sprung up between the Sultan and his distinguished vassal, tended naturally at the outset, to increase his standing and importance at the seat of central government; and to give his counsels and advice, the weight and influence of enlarged experience, joined to superior merit. For the Sultan to have summarily rejected all interference on the part of Mehemet Ali, in the affairs of those provinces contiguous to the one he ruled, though not immediately under his control,—would have been to doubt his zeal for the public interests,

and to inflict a mortification both uncalled for and insidious. To strengthen therefore the feelings of amity, and the ties of allegiance, by admitting him to the privilege of, and more or less, to the deference consequent on a frank and confidential intimacy, in all matters respecting the prosperity, honour, and dignity of the State, appeared at this period of the Viceroy's career, to be a course dictated by principles of sound and generous policy.

Such, at all events, was the position held by Mehemet Ali in connexion with the Porte, about the present period, and the Emir Bechir cannot be accused of having indulged in too sanguine expectations, when he bethought himself of looking to this quarter, for relief and deliverance from his adverse fortunes. Many days had not elapsed after his disembarkation in Egypt, ere he found himself handsomely lodged in one of the Viceroy's palaces, in Cairo, and receiving the daily attentions of some of the members of his family. Ibrahim Pasha repeatedly paid him visits of ceremony, and appeared to be anxiously interested in his welfare. The Deftedar, or public treasurer, received orders to transmit to him 100*l.* monthly, for his private

expenses, besides unlimited rations for his attendants, and the horses provided for his use.

About the beginning of the year 1822, a letter was placed in the hands of the Emir by a private agent of Mustafa Pasha, in which the Seraskier again informed him of his appointment to the Pashalick of Acre and Sidon, and promised to reinstate him in his post as Governor of the Lebanon, if he would immediately return to Syria, and accept the Pelisse of honour at his hands. The Emir at once laid this communication before Mehemet Ali, who directed him simply to reply, that as he was now enjoying the hospitality and protection of the Viceroy of Egypt, he could not take any determination without his advice and consent. At this very moment, the entire forces of the Turkish Government in Arabistan, honoured by the presence, and guided by the combined talents and abilities of seven Pashas, were daily bombarding the walls of Acre.

It will naturally be supposed, that the Emir Bechir had not now been some months in Cairo, without having had various occasions presented to him, of making Mehemet Ali intimately acquainted

with the exact state of affairs in Syria, nor without having succeeded in getting him to exert his influence, to bring about an arrangement coinciding with his own views and interests. Indeed, the Viceroy needed no great persuasion, to induce him to extend his assistance and lend his interference to one who, by his station and experience, was so eminently adapted to promote his own designs on that province. With what utility and effect, may be conjectured from the fact, that a despatch arrived from Constantinople, late in the spring of the same year that his representations were first forwarded thither in favour of Abdallah Pasha, stating that, by an act of imperial clemency, the rebellious proceedings of that functionary had been overlooked, and his delinquencies forgiven. The Emir, on the receipt of this intelligence, lost no time in sending a private emissary to Acre, informing his friend and patron of the fortunate change which had taken place in their prospects, and urging him to hold out to the last extremity, against his enemies.

CHAPTER XXV.

ASSURED by the success which had attended his application in behalf of Abdallah Pasha, Mehemet Ali thought that he might now, without exciting remark or suspicion, exhibit such individual marks of friendship and regard to the Emir Bechir, as should make a lasting impression upon him, and secure him to his interests, by the ties of gratitude and personal affection. The palace and gardens of Shobra, now rising in all their pristine beauty and freshness, were chosen as the theatre of an entertainment to be given to his distinguished guest. Surrounded by his sons and the principal officers of his court, the Viceroy received the Emir with the courtesy and affability of an equal, rather than the dignity and condescension of a superior;

introducing him to each of those personages, with a studied peculiarity and earnestness of manner, which implied his position to be that of an ally and confidential adviser, rather than of an exile claiming the rights of hospitality.

It was not, however, until the following day, that the real object of this ostentatious display was fully developed. Taking the Emir apart into his private divan, the Viceroy at length entered unreservedly into a detailed explanation of his most secret schemes and projects. Syria, he stated, had ever been most happy and prosperous, when looking to the Sovereigns of Egypt, as their rightful and legitimate rulers; whereas, under the domination of the Ottomans, its finest resources and capabilities had been gradually wasted, and finally, neglected and destroyed. The grinding and rapacious tyranny of the Turkish Pashas, who were intrusted with the administration of its most fertile provinces, had reduced the people to beggary, and consigned their lands to barrenness and waste.

The Lebanon, which, under a stable government, might reveal a scene of happiness and contentment

unrivalled in the East, had been, by their heartless policy, converted into a constant field of civil strife and discord; and altogether by its distance from the central seat of government, and by the total apathy and indifference with which the proceedings of its local authorities were viewed by the Porte, Syria had lapsed into a condition of weakness, exhaustion, and desolation, not to say barbarism, which rendered any attempt to save it from a longer continuance of its complicated miseries, not only lawful, but to a neighbouring state like that of Egypt, both politic and necessary.

The Viceroy proceeded to contrast with this just and well-drawn picture, the appearance and prospects of his own Principality, since the period of his firm establishment in power; commerce extending, manufactures encouraged, a scientific application of agriculture unsealing the hidden properties of the earth, which the waters were made to fertilize with mechanical and equable effect, and various other tokens of industry and improvement; in a word, a general impulse and activity given to the whole social system, which promised to raise Egypt to a state of civilization

and prosperity, hitherto unknown to Oriental nations.

That his services were appreciated, and his capabilities for governing, acknowledged by his supreme Lord and Master, the Sultan himself, was evident from the fact, that he was about to be called upon to exert his means and energies for the support of the Imperial authority, in the Morea, now a prey to the menacing evils of a widely-extended and well-organized rebellion; and it was not at all improbable that, should his loyal efforts in that distant province be crowned with success, his Sovereign would not be unwilling to be relieved of the trouble and vexation of legislating for a people who, like the Arabs, were continually evading or resisting demands which they abhorred; or of controlling Pashas as turbulent as the people they robbed and plundered, and ever engaged in mutual quarrels and contentions, alike degrading to themselves and the power they served.

Finally, the Viceroy frankly stated it to be his fixed determination sooner or later, to annex Syria to his own dominions; and concluded by engaging the Emir Bechir, by virtue of their present auspi-

cious intimacy and friendship, as well as by his own hopes for a permanent and lasting enjoyment of power in the Lebanon, by himself and his descendants, to be prepared to give him his sincere and hearty co-operation, when the period should arrive, at which he should deem it expedient to proceed in the prosecution of these, his views and intentions. On the Emir's return to his own abode, he found a splendid suit of clothes awaiting him, and a purse containing 4000*l.*

The arrival of a Firman from Constantinople, a few weeks after this interview, appointing Abdallah Pasha governor of Acre, and Mushir of the Ealet Saida, gave the crowning testimony to the Viceroy's influence, and cheered the Emir with the prospects of a speedy return to his own country. Summoned to a farewell meeting, the Emir, accompanied by his three sons, went to declare his inexpressible acknowledgments to Mehemet Ali, for the unexpectedly generous, and unusually hospitable treatment, he had experienced during his stay in Egypt. Renewing his warmest professions of attachment and devotion, which now had a peculiar significance, the Emir declared himself henceforth

bound to the Viceroy, by the unalterable sentiments of fidelity and gratitude; while the latter, on his part, after an affectionate assurance of the deep interest he should ever take in the happiness and welfare of the Emir and his sons, proceeded to invest them each successively with a handsome Pelisse of honour; the last and most emphatic mark of distinction, which an Eastern magnate confers upon the object of his favour and approbation.

As if to originate in some degree that community of interest, which he had endeavoured so forcibly to instil into the mind of the Emir as essential to their common fortunes, and to commence as soon as possible, a species of co-operation that might keep alive the feelings of sympathy and mutual reliance, which he had designedly endeavoured to establish between them,—the Viceroy's last request to him was, to prepare as soon as possible after his return to the Lebanon, a corps of 4000 able mountaineers, to be employed if required in the Morea; adding, that the handsomest gratuities should be offered, to induce them to enlist on such an expedition, and a guarantee given to their families for their punctual return, at the expiration of the

period of service. Three days afterwards, the Emir and his suite sailed for Acre, in a frigate expressly ordered out to convey them by Mehemet Ali, whose Salahdar,* bearer of the Firman to Abdallah Pasha, accompanied them on board.

A general salute from all the seaward batteries of Acre, announced to the Turkish Pashas, who for nine months had been vainly beleaguering that city, the arrival of an Egyptian man of war, bearing, as it soon became known, the Emir Bechir. On the following day, a flag of truce having been previously sent out to announce their approach, Abdallah Pasha, bearing the Firman conferring upon him the Pashalick of Sidon, and accompanied by the Emir and the Salahdar of Mehemet Ali, went in grand state to the tent of Mustafa Pasha, for the purpose of reading it aloud in the presence of all the principal officers of the Turkish camp. Fortunately relieved by this event, from the disgrace and ignominy which would have attached to their having fruitlessly endeavoured to reduce the Sultan's contumacious vassal to his allegiance, the hostile Pashas lost no time in drawing off their

* Armour-bearer.

several forces, and ere long the plains of Acre assumed their wonted appearance of barrenness and silent desolation.

Amongst the conditions appended to the restitution of Abdallah Pasha to his former rank and dignity, was one requiring an immediate payment to the Porte of 10,000 purses. It now became urgent with him, therefore, to commence measures for satisfying this exorbitant demand. It naturally devolved upon the Emir Bechir, to give not only his counsel but his assistance, in this delicate and important emergency, and the Lebanon was of course looked to as the unfailing medium of satisfying all outstanding claims against that Turkish authority. The occasion thus presented to the Emir, of gratifying his feelings of private animosity and resentment against the Sheik Bechir, was too valuable to be lost, and he therefore directed the attention of the Pasha to that Druse Sheik, as being one who by his vast means and resources, was well able to assist in liquidating such an onerous impost.

Fully commissioned, upon his own suggestions, to exact such a sum as he deemed necessary from

that quarter, the Emir sent an early communication to the Sheik Bechir, to inform him that the Mountain having been called upon for a special "benevolence" to the public treasury, his individual share in the general contribution amounted to 1000 purses. The Sheik sent, without hesitation, the sum of 500 purses, and prayed for further delay to enable him to collect the remainder. After having transmitted this prompt instalment to the Pasha's treasury, and engaged himself to take such steps as should speedily relieve the Pasha himself, from all further uneasiness on account of his pecuniary liabilities to the Porte, the Emir took his departure from Acre, and early the next morning made his reappearance at Ebtedeen, amidst general acclamation and rejoicing, after an absence of nearly twelve months.

Scarcely settled in the renewed exercise of his customary functions, the Emir sent Howalies to Muctara, demanding from the Sheik Bechir the immediate acquittal of the other half of the fine imposed upon him, and expressing the utter impossibility of suspending any longer the execution of the Pasha's imperative orders, for the prompt

collection of the entire sums required from the Lebanon. The Sheik upon this, fully suspecting the real design of his former friend and confidential ally, and knowing too well the stern and unyielding nature of his disposition when once aroused to active jealousy and hate, judged it most expedient, under all circumstances, to withdraw from so dangerous a vicinity; and hastily arranging a trusty suite of followers, retreated to one of his villages in the Bekaa, where he was shortly afterwards joined by the Emir Abbas Shehaab, who had ruled during the Emir Bechir's absence in Egypt—the Emirs Faris and Soliman, the Emirs Mousa and Soliman Bilemma of El Mettane, and various other Druse Sheiks.

The deliberation which now ensued between these discontented chiefs, resulted in the decision, that for the present at least, all attempts to brave the authority of the Emir Bechir would be ill-timed and premature, and that before attempting any hostile demonstration, it would be as well to try the effect of a peaceful intervention, for the reconciliation of all parties. With these views, the whole party proceeded directly to Damascus, for the

purpose of claiming the good offices and friendly interference of Mustafa Pasha, now resident in that city; and who from his high station and influence might, they thought, be engaged beneficially in their behalf, in their contemplated communication with the Emir Bechir. The experiment amply succeeded, and that Pasha at once undertook the office of mediator between the two parties, writing at the same time to Abdallah Pasha, and urging him to second him in his generous efforts.

Some months, however, elapsed before the Emir Bechir, even though sanctioned by Abdallah Pasha, could be induced to hear of receiving as friends, those who had taken such an active part against him, at a not very remote crisis; and it was not until the close of the year 1824, that he finally intimated to Mustafa Pasha, that in consideration of the high esteem which he entertained for him personally, and out of respect to the representations coming from one so high in the favour of their common lord and master, the Sultan,—he was prepared to enter into such an arrangement, as might enable the fugitive chiefs to return to their abodes, without danger of molestation. Under what they

considered to be a safe conduct from the Turkish government, the Sheik Bechir and his partizans, after making their grateful acknowledgments and submissive obeisances to the Pasha who had so ably and successfully espoused their cause, once more turned to ascend their native Mountains, and in one day arrived at Muctara.

To seek an early interview with the Emir Bechir was now a natural suggestion, and indeed a fitting termination of their previous estrangement. His own relatives, as superior in rank, first essayed the somewhat unwelcome but indispensable duty; and, having first intimated their intentions in the proper quarter, prepared to meet the redoubtable head of their family, with the best grace and composure they could. After the usual preliminaries and formalities, they were admitted into his presence. Received with that freezing dignity of manner, which none better than the Emir Bechir knew how to assume, the arch-conspirators attempted to mumble out such complimentary phrases as might best relieve, though they but ill-concealed, their agitated feelings; and then awaited some trifling symptom of favour and

encouragement. But nought beyond the ordinary rejoinders dictated by politeness, and a few mysterious glances from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, for a time gave evidence of the Emir's cogitations.

At length, after a long silence, large successive volumes of smoke fitfully emitted from the bowl of his pipe, and the unwonted waving of his beard, painfully indicated an approaching explosion of some long pent-up emotion; and the abashed Emirs tremblingly anticipated a terrific denunciation of their past delinquency. No expletive oratory, however, assailed their ears: a simple phrase, "Sign that,"—delivered in a stern but subdued tone of voice,—while at the same time a secretary prepared to read aloud to them a written document, which the Emir drew out from beneath the folds of his mantle,—was the sole but portentous progeny of that alarming agitation. In brief but unmistakable terms, the Emirs Abbas, Faris, and Soliman Shehaab therein bound themselves, never again during their entire lives, to excite discontent and disaffection, or to lend themselves parties to intrigues, or to endeavour in any way, directly or indirectly, to disturb the government of the Emir

Bechir in Mount Lebanon, or any other parts subject to his jurisdiction,—under penalty of having the pupils of their eyes seared with a redhot iron, and their tongues cut out!

Without offering the slightest difficulty or objection, nay, rather rivalling each other in the most ardent expressions of devotion and attachment to the Emir; freely accusing themselves for their past folly and ingratitude, and loudly vociferating that not only their eyes and tongues, but their bodies and lives, as well as those of the whole family of Shehaab, were entirely at the Emir's disposal; the Emirs put their seals to the deed, which was forthwith docketed and secured, and a copy placed on the official register. This singular, and perhaps original procedure, being completed, the Emir now exhibited a kindness and affability of manner towards his relatives, which might perhaps in some degree have recompensed them for their previous uneasiness and embarrassment. Pressed to spend a short time at Ebtedeen, they partook of its wonted profusion and hospitality, received the congratulations of all, on their fortunate return to favour, and, after receiving presents from the Emir both

of money and clothes, returned to their homes, to all outward appearance at least, with the greatest joy and satisfaction.

The reception given by the Emir to the Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, was far different in its nature to the one just described, and prepared with a well-studied attempt at display and effect. The Druse Sheik, on his part, appeared with an unusual degree of parade and show; and he who used in other days, to ride over from Muctara to Ebtedeen daily, with one or at most two, attendants, now approached its gates, accompanied by upwards of a thousand horse. The sight of the Meedan, must have convinced him that far other feelings now existed between himself and the Emir Bechir, than was wont to signalise their former intimacy and friendship. A double row of armed attendants drawn up on foot, extending along its entire length, and reaching to the great marble flight of steps leading to the Emir's divan, indicated either an extraordinary honour or an imposing menace; and the Sheik, as he passed between the ranks with grave and not altogether unsuspicious mien, must have half-mistrusted such an ostentatious welcome.

Beyond the common-place incidents which invariably mark a meeting between the Mountain Chiefs, and which have been already fully described, nothing at the commencement of the Sheik's interview with the Emir, seemed to announce more than a cold and formal reconciliation; and a judicious silence, mutually observed, on all past proceedings, promised to prevent the possibility of any interruption to the harmony of their renewed intercourse. At length, however, and shortly previous to his departure, the Emir touched upon the delicate subject of the arrears still due by the Sheik; adding that he had been so repeatedly, and now so long, urged by Abdallah Pasha upon the subject, that however reluctant he might individually feel to exact a payment which might be inconvenient, he had no alternative left, but to use his utmost endeavours to accomplish that object; and earnestly hoped the Sheik would relieve him from all further disquiet on that score, by at once remitting the remaining sum of 500 purses still due upon his original contract of 1000.

In vain the Sheik began to expose his financial

condition, and begged the Emir to take into consideration the promptness he had shown, as well as the difficulty he had experienced, in collecting the first half of that sum; the extraordinary expenses he had lately been obliged to incur, when seeking to avoid the very payment which was now so unexpectedly insisted upon, concluding by entreating, at all events, a further extension of the period for raising the remaining half, than had at present been allowed him: the Emir was inexorable, again pleaded the difficulty of his position, and again begged the Sheik to save him the necessity of sending complaints to Acre, or of taking measures which might endanger the continuance of their common friendship. In a mood of mind which did not bode well for the repose of the Lebanon, the Sheik Bechir at length hastily demanded leave to depart; and, quitting the Emir's presence with a hurried and convulsive step, soon vaulted into his saddle, and, laying the reins carelessly on his mare's neck, returned silent and pensive to Muctara.

That same evening, throughout the wide district of the Shoof, the rapid movements of the distant

lights, the sudden bustle, followed by an equally sudden silence, which distinguished many an humble cottage, the low murmurs of inquiry and response which flitted about the different court-yards connecting the habitations of each separate village,—all denoted that some important event had disturbed the ordinary monotony of mountain life. And long after the abodes of man had ceased to give tokens of this unusual trouble and excitement, the winding and rugged paths of many a wooded steep, resounded to the rustle and hurried tread of human figures, stealing along in solemn quietude and anxious contemplation, as if bent upon some engrossing and absorbing errand.

No war cry had been sounded, no signal shots had awakened the slumbering echoes of hill and dale, no impetuous rider urging his horse's flanks with desperate strength, had emerged from the glens, or dashed along the stony heights of that romantic region—yet there they were, those Druse Ockals—swiftly converging to a common centre, as though directed by an unseen agency, and instinctively obeying the biddings of some secret and mysterious impulse! Seated in the corner of a low

dark vault, his diminutive stature wrapped in a black cloak, and playing with a string of beads, the Sheik Bechir awaited, in anxious expectation, the coming of his trusty vassals. As midnight approached, successive arrivals gradually filled the gloomy space, until at last, a compact mass of white turbans indicated, that the Druse Divan was complete.

Without detailing what now ensued, or stating the many and various topics on which the Sheik, with his wonted energy and eloquence enlarged, suffice it to say, that he finally declared his firm resolve never to submit to the domineering tyranny of the Emir Bechir, — intrusted his cause to those faithful adherents who now surrounded him,—and vowing never to return to Muctara, unless he could exercise an authority unfettered by the harassing intrusion of the Prince who now sought his ruin and destruction, immediately prepared for his departure. Ere the dawn broke, he was once more a fugitive and wanderer, about to await in the most northern parts of the Lebanon, such a turn in his fortunes, as fate and circumstances might accomplish.

CHAPTER XXVI.

As soon as the flight of the Sheik Bechir was known at Ebtedeen, the Emir declared all his estates confiscated, and at once sent Howalies to seize his available property. No great time however elapsed, before it became evident, that the treatment experienced by the Sheik Bechir had awakened a deep and general sympathy throughout the Mountain. Added to this, the severe measures taken by the Emir, to raise the funds necessary not only for his own private use, but also to satisfy the insatiable demands of Abdallah Pasha, had given rise to a burst of disaffection, which only wanted guidance and combination, to render it both serious and menacing. Chiefs soon appeared to avail themselves of the common feeling, for the purpose

of advancing their party views, and everything gradually conspired to place the Sheik Bechir, even though himself away from the scene of action, at the head of a widely extended and formidable rebellion.

Sheik Ali Amad, partly from that caprice and inconsistency which ever marks a needy and unprincipled adventurer, and partly because he imagined success could not fail of attending upon the overwhelming demonstration which exhibited itself against the Emir, now espoused the cause of his former enemy, and with all the clan of Amad, passed over to the ranks of the Sheik Bechir. The Emir Mousa, and Soliman of the House of Bilemma, at the head of the greater part of the Metten; and, more extraordinary than all, the Emirs Abbas, Faris, and Soliman Shehaab, actively engaged in arranging and organizing measures of hostility. The Emir Bechir now discovered that he had counted too much on the stability of his position, and hastened to apprize Abdallah Pasha of the grave complication of events which had suddenly arisen. To that degree did his anxiety extend, that he further communicated an account of the critical aspect of

affairs to Mehemet Ali, as though indulging in the hope that aid might be afforded him from that influential quarter. The Nekads, Abdel-Meliks and Talhooks, it is true, appeared staunch to his cause, but the force they could bring into the field in no way promised to counterbalance those that were arrayed against him. Every day brought him fresh news of some accession to the enemy's ranks, and the accumulation of well-armed mountaineers at Muctara, at last gave unequivocal indications of an approaching contest.

At last, on the 16th February, 1825, reports were, at an early hour, brought into Ebtedeen that a large body of men, headed by the Emir Mousa, and Soliman Bilemma, and several Druse Sheiks of the Houses of Eed, Shums, and Harmoosh, were rapidly spreading over the plain of Sumkaneea, with shouts and firing. Not anticipating so sudden a denouement, the Emir, in the perplexity of the moment, bethought himself of at once retiring from the proximity of such a tumultuous demonstration, and gave orders to his household to prepare for a speedy departure. The successful remonstrances of the few Druse Chiefs who hap-

pened to be present, and especially of Sheik Hosein Talhook, induced him, however, to abandon these intentions; and, quietly resigning himself to the effect of such exertions as the few adherents who were about his person should be able to make, he consented to await the issue of events.

The march of the Jumblatteiy was almost unopposed, for the few straggling parties which were suddenly despatched from Deir el Kammar on the first news of their approach, were wholly unable to check their progress. In less than two hours, the heights immediately above Ebtedeen were crowned by their advanced parties, who literally fired into its very courts. The Druse Sheiks who were with the Emir, accompanied by his sons, and about 700 men, now went gallantly forth, determined to risk all, rather than be witnesses of the humiliation of their Prince; and, having taken a road that imperceptibly led to the rear of their adventurous opponents,—by the suddenness of their appearance, and the impetuosity of their onset, obliged them to seek a hasty retreat.

Rashly pursuing their advantage, they followed in pursuit until they reached the plain of Sum-

kaneea, where they found the whole army of the Jumblatts drawn out in battle array, amounting to nearly 20,000 men. In the interval, however, the Nekads and Abdel-Meliks had appeared upon the field, and extending themselves in such a manner as to give an imposing idea of their numbers, engaged vigorously with the enemy's line. For a few hours the unequal contest was kept up between the two sides, without much apparent effect; but the little army of the Emir Bechir, at last overpowered by numbers, was gradually yielding ground, when a loud and long-continued shouting on the enemy's left flank, indicated the presence of some auxiliary force. Suddenly the breaking of the hostile line, and the sudden flying of its left and centre, betokened an unlooked-for but decisive reverse in that direction.

Abdallah Pasha, on the first news of the danger which threatened the Emir Bechir, had ordered out all his irregular cavalry, and ordered them to proceed without delay to the Mountain. And it was their opportune arrival on the field of battle, which had resulted in consequences so fatal to the Sheik Bechir. Driven back in complete confu-

sion, by the impetuosity of this well-timed attack, the Jumblatteiy now fled precipitately in every direction; and, ere the evening closed, were once more assembled, astonished and discomfited, within the precincts of Muctara. A remarkable incident which occurred during the action, contributed as much as any thing to the defeat of the Jumblatts.

Sheik Ali Amad, who, during the greater part of the day had been seen gallantly heading his Druses, with his usual courage and heroism, was observed all at once to turn his horse's head and seek the rear. This movement, so unusual in that distinguished Chief, gave an idea to those who witnessed it, that he was deserting his cause, and the cry of "treason" soon spread from rank to rank. The ominous sound acted like a panic on the adjacent troops, who forthwith commenced a disorderly retreat. In vain the Sheik endeavoured to convince them that the real cause of his leaving the field was his wounds, and even paused to show the fugitives his bleeding clothes,—the contagious feeling had been communicated to parts of the field beyond the reach of his immediate presence,

and no entreaties or threats could now arrest the retrograde movement.

Nearly three weeks were now passed in messages and parleyings between the parties. The Emirs of the Metten demanded, in the absence, and on the part of, the Sheik Bechir, that he should be restored to his former position, as principal adviser and chief councillor to the Emir Bechir. The latter firmly rejected a proposition, which would have obliged him again to submit to a control and surveillance, from which it was his most especial desire to escape. Various modifications were proposed, but none could satisfy the Emir, whose jealous watchfulness lest his power should again become virtually dependent on his powerful rival, baffled all the suggestions of artifice and ingenuity. Towards the expiration of this interval, the Sheik Bechir himself arrived from Akkar, to the north of Bisherry, where he had been awaiting the progress of events.

About the same time, it is worthy of remark, a letter arrived from Mehemet Ali, containing an offer of sending 10,000 men to the Emir's assistance, in case of necessity. The presence of the Sheik

Bechir, and the language he held on the news of the defeat of his adherents, led many to suppose that he would not be averse to an accommodation; which would have been wholly opposed to the feelings and wishes of the more violent of his partizans, who aimed at nothing less than the deposition of the Emir Bechir, and were willing to incur any risk to accomplish their darling object. As soon as it became evident, from the fact of messengers going to and fro, between Muctara and Ebtedeen, that such suspicions were not without foundation; and when it was, moreover, known, that a truce had actually been signed between the Sheik and the Emir,—Sheik Ali Amad, who had barely recovered from his wounds, determined, together with Sheik Ali Hassan Jumblatt, to compromise the two Chiefs by a sudden act of hostility; and, secretly gathering together their forces, fell upon the village of Bakleen, in the vicinity of Ebtedeen, by night.

The active and courageous resistance offered by the Druse family of Ahmadi, and for which they were afterwards elevated to the rank of Sheiks, defeated their intention. These proceedings, how-

ever, as they were thought to be at the instigation of the Sheik Bechir, had the effect of inducing the Emir Bechir to resort to measures, which gave him at last a final ascendency over his still formidable foe, and put an end to this singular state of affairs. Leading out his forces in person, the Emir now, in his turn, made a forward movement on Muctara, and sought a renewal of hostilities. For three successive days the fighting continued between the two parties, with no decisive results, although it became evident at last, that the Sheik was too strongly supported to leave much chance of reducing him, by superior force. The Emir now had recourse to stratagem. Early on the morning of the 4th day, and in the last week of the month of March, a Druse Ockal arrived at Muctara from Ebtedeen, seeking an immediate interview with the Sheik Bechir. Admitted to his presence, the messenger drew forth from his bosom a plain piece of paper, and presenting it to the Sheik, informed him that the Emir had sent him a "carte blanche," with his seal affixed, and that whatever stipulations the Sheik might require, as a condition of peace and reconciliation, he had only to write

them out in full length, and they would be at once recognised as good and valid.

The Sheik, astonished and overjoyed at so much candour and generosity on the part of the Emir, was proceeding to fill up the "carte blanche" according to his views and wishes, when the sound of sudden firing in the distance announced some unexpected movement. Ere he had time to send out to discover its meaning, the heights above the river Barook, opposite to his palace, appeared covered with armed men, rapidly descending from various directions into the valley below. The cry to arms was at once sounded, and the Sheik bravely endeavoured to lead forth his array; but the Emir Bechir, by the suddenness and rapidity of his advance, rendered anything like an organized and well-combined defence impossible, and after a fruitless and irregular attempt to emerge from the position in which they found themselves confined, increased by the singular advantage obtained by the Emir's soldiers, of rolling great stones down upon their heads, the Sheik's followers broke ground, and fled towards the passes that lead to Jezeen and the Bekaa.

The Emir humanely prevented his victorious troops from descending into Muctara, as he dreaded the consequences which might ensue to the Sheik's harem, and the other females, who had not yet been allowed time to leave the place of their abode; in this instance displaying that moderation and delicacy which always distinguished his behaviour towards the weaker sex. The Sheik Bechir effected a hasty escape accompanied by a few trusty followers, and in a few hours reached the Houran, where, however, he was closely watched for some weeks, and at last taken prisoner by some of the irregular troops of the Pasha of Damascus, to which city he was first taken, and then at the Emir's request, forwarded to Abdallah Pasha at Acre. Sheik Ali Amad was also among his companions, and amongst the number of those who with him were taken captive to Damascus. The Pasha had already given his instructions with respect to this formidable and daring Druse Sheik, and on his arrival at the gate of the Serail, even before he had time to dismount, his head was struck off his shoulders.

The reception given by Abdallah Pasha to the

Sheik Bechir, promised at first to bid well for his safety and welfare; sustaining his hopes by promises of using his influence to effect for him a speedy reconciliation with the Emir Bechir, the Pasha showed him every mark of kindness and even of generosity, repeatedly sending to encourage and cheer him in the place of his confinement. Free permission to indulge in the luxury of the bath, and a fresh suit of clothes, were indulgences which bespoke anything but a hostile spirit, and the Sheik began to console himself that he might still live to see better days. Another messenger had lately arrived at Ebtedeen, from Mehemet Ali, bearer of a letter, in which the Viceroy again wished to be informed of the exact state of affairs in the Lebanon, and whether the Emir still stood in need of the 10,000 men which he had previously placed at his disposal.

The Emir, in reply, gratefully testified his sense of the great interest thus taken in his welfare by the Viceroy of Egypt, and while rejoicing in being able to inform him of the happy dissipation of the danger by which he had been lately menaced, and the victorious termination of his struggle with his

enemies, he took occasion to advert to the extraordinary reception which had been given by Abdallah Pasha, to his most formidable and persevering enemy and rival—he who had been the prime mover of all the machinations which had lately disturbed the peace of the Lebanon; and humbly but earnestly requested the Viceroy's influence, to put a stop to a measure of such dubious policy, as countenancing, by such unequivocal marks of friendship and sympathy, the man whose criminal ambition had been the cause of so much tumult and bloodshed. In conclusion, he frankly stated, that while the Sheik Bechir lived, there could be no guarantee against a renewal of the recent scenes of disorder and confusion.

In the month of May, 1825, an express messenger arrived at Acre, in a vessel from Alexandria, with secret and pressing despatches from the Viceroy to Abdallah Pasha. On the following morning, the prison tefeketchies* came as usual to inspect their prisoners. Sheik Bechir Jumblatt and Sheik Hottar Amad, son of Sheik Ali, then a mere youth, and still living and inheriting both the indomitable courage and the fickleness of his father, were con-

* Police.

fined in the same room. A change in the manner of their keepers, who had ordinarily been particularly kind and familiar, gave ominous indication that they were the involuntary bearers of some unwelcome news. The Sheik Bechir at once guessed and anticipated the nature of their mission. "I see what it is," said he, "God's will be done;" and, simply adding in a tone of heartbroken affection, "I hope the boys are well, and that no harm is intended to them," alluding to his two sons, who were still with the Pasha at Damascus, held out his head, and with his own hands baring his neck, received the fatal bowstring with imperturbable coolness and presence of mind. Denied a common burial, the body was dragged through the streets, and flung on a heap of rubbish outside the walls of the town.

Great wealth, combined with no inconsiderable degree of that tact and adroitness, those remarkable characteristics of the Druse character, had conspired to place the Sheik Bechir in a position, which for many years gave him the chief direction of affairs in Mount Lebanon. In fact, the Emir Bechir had ever been under singular obligations

to the family of Jumblatt, and the support he had on so many occasions received from that influential quarter, had been one of the main elements of his success, as a perusal of his past history will amply testify. The close friendship and intimacy, therefore, which sprung up between him and the Sheik Bechir was but natural, and the ordinary consequences of the antecedent alliance of their families.

To be cordially supported in his government by one united to him by ties of personal regard, and at the same time so well able to give him the benefit of a powerful political adhesion, was an advantage the Emir Bechir could not well afford to forego, considering the precarious state of parties and the presence of rival factions, which constantly threatened to disturb if not to embarrass his administration; nor can he be rightly accused of weakness and imbecility, if, to perpetuate these great advantages and secure a co-operation so essentially necessary for the stability of his official career, he consented to abandon in some degree the exercise of unrestricted power,—even to such a degree, as to induce the general belief that the functions of government had practically passed

into the hands of his influential colleague. It is seldom, however, that such equivocal relations are lasting and sincere, and however long a commanding temperament may, for reasons of expediency, submit to accept the fetters of a conventional inferiority, and to exhibit an obsequious deference both forced and hypocritical, the season for emancipation will not the less be anxiously anticipated, and eagerly employed.

Moreover, the occasional endeavours made by the one to escape from a state of feigned submission naturally led to slights and refusals painful and humiliating to the other. It may well, therefore, be supposed, that feelings of jealousy on the one hand, and mortification on the other, had long led to a state of coldness and formality between the Emir Bechir and the Druse Sheik, which only wanted a plausible occasion to burst into open and undisguised enmity. And thus, the conduct of the Sheik Bechir, at the critical period which preceded the Emir's departure for Egypt, evidently showed, that he was only watching an opportunity to assist in displacing a Prince, whom he had ceased to control; and of attaching the prestige of

his name and influence to some other member of the House of Shehaab, whose weakness and incapacity would enable him, once more, practically to enjoy, without a check, all the power and advantages of a post, which his rank forbid his ever even nominally attaining.

The open hostility in which he at last found himself involved against the Emir Bechir, was probably against his inclination, and forced upon him by his partizans, rather than suggested by his own wishes. The general feeling of discontent excited against the Emir, by the exorbitant exactions he was compelled to make on his return from Egypt, to satisfy the rapacious cravings of Abdallah Pasha, had thrown the people into such a state of feverish excitement, that they gladly rallied round any name which promised a prospect of relief from their burdens and distresses; and thus the Sheik Bechir found his own private grievances so blended with the popular wrongs, as to preclude almost the possibility of moderation. And had he thrown the whole energy of his own individual character into the scale, and, rejecting all terms of compromise and accommodation, boldly

advanced in person on Ebtedeen, there cannot be a doubt that he might almost at any time during that brief struggle, have won for himself at least a momentary ascendency.

No sooner did the news reach the Emir Bechir, of his execution, than he sent working parties forthwith to Muctara, for the purpose of razing its noble palace to the ground. The marbles and fountains which so profusely decorated it, were carefully uprooted, and after having been placed on the backs of camels, sent to Ebtedeen, where they were distributed as want and taste required. The revenues of the magnificent estates, both in the Lebanon and the Bekaa, which were the Sheik's private property, the Emir appropriated to his own use. The Bilemmas, Raslans, and Amads, who had, more than any others, abetted and conducted the late rising, were deprived of their respective Macaatas, which were transferred to and distributed amongst the Emir's own sons and favourite relations; the Emirs Haleel, Kassim, and Milheim of Baabda, being severally appointed to the Shoof, the Lower Ghurb, and the Metten.

From this period, the Emir Bechir ruled with

undivided and despotic power over the Lebanon, which henceforward looked up to him as a sovereign Prince, while to Abdallah Pasha, his demeanour was that almost of an equal, whose superior authority was only displayed by the yearly sending of the Pelisse of honour to Ebtedeen. This event was always treated as a fête. The moment the courier arrived with the Pelisse within the Palace of Ebtedeen, a signal gun would announce the auspicious event to the people of Deir el Kammar. That town would now immediately burst forth into firing and illuminations, which were from thence contagiously taken up from village to village, until, in a few hours, the whole range of the Lebanon was lit up and animated with the exciting scene.

There still remained, however, a certain party, without whose punishment it may be well supposed, the Emir Bechir would still look upon his triumph and perhaps his peace and tranquillity, as incomplete and uncertain. The Shehaab Emirs had disgraced the plains of Sumkaneea with their presence, and honoured it by their flight. But, in place of hiding their faces in the uttermost parts

of the Houran, those noble delinquents, as though wholly unconscious of their peril, lingered about the Lebanon, and finally lodged themselves in the Convent of Kahloneea, near the Metten, where as a matter of course, they did not long escape the researches which were being made for them; and being seized and pinioned, were taken to Ebtedeen.

This time they had no reception nor countenance of any kind, the Emir declining to give himself the trouble of seeing them. Having been shown into an outer room, joining the Meedan, the Chief of the Police soon made his appearance, and showed them a paper which they all recognised. The seals of Abbas, Faris and Soliman were indisputably there,—there could be no mistake. Nor indeed did the unfortunate Emirs endeavour to excuse or palliate their folly, and the Emir Abbas, particularly, in the midst of his torments, loudly admitted the justice of their fate. Each Emir was held down in a squatting position, with his hands tied behind him, and his face turned upwards. The officiating tefeketchy now approached his victim, and standing over him, as if about to extract a tooth, forced

open his mouth, and darting a hook through the top of the tongue, pulled it out, until the root was exposed; one or two passes of a razor sufficed to cut it out. It is a curious fact, however, that the tongues grew again sufficient for the purposes of speech. A redhot iron was then passed backwards and forwards across the pupil of the eye, until vision was extinct. The Emir had only acted on his bond!*

* Vol. iii. p. 358.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE Revolution in Greece had excited the fears rather than the hopes of the Christians inhabiting the sea-coast towns of Syria, and the Lebanon would never have cordially responded to a cry to arms, proceeding from Greek patriots. In the East, the real spirit of the religion of Christ is merged and lost sight of in ignorant and superstitious bigotry, combined with sectarian pride and self-sufficiency; and an appeal to rally round the Cross, supposing it were ever to be made, would be a firebrand and a source of discord, instead of a bond of love and union, amongst the Oriental Christians. Isolated, without mutual sympathy, nay, fired with feelings of reciprocal hatred and mistrust, the various Christian sects who occupy

the plains of Syria, live in perpetual dread of some outbreak of Mohammedan fanaticism, and with the meanest subserviency court and flatter their proud and overbearing rulers.

And thus, when the Greeks were fighting for their independence, in the Morea, every news of their success struck a panic into the hearts of the miserable Christian communities who eked out their degraded existence in the towns of Beyrout, Sidon, Acre, &c. from the natural dread that revenge would be taken upon them, for the triumphs of their co-religionists. With them, consequently, it became a necessary affectation, in their intercourse with the Turks, to deprecate such exertions as disloyal to their sovereign, and the result of a foolish and criminal spirit of insubordination. It was, therefore, from a sense of prudence, and well-judged discretion, that the Christians of Beyrout, on the occasion of a descent made on the coast, under the walls of that town, by a Greek force, in 1826, anxiously rallied to adopt measures of defence against the unwelcome arrival, and promptly shut their gates against their imagined deliverers.

In the present instance, their promptness and courage probably saved the town from indiscriminate ravage, for it soon appeared that the invading force consisted entirely of a band of pirates, who thus audaciously essayed to satisfy their thirst for plunder. The news of the descent, however, soon spread into the Mountain, and shortly afterwards the Emir Bechir, heading a large force of Mountaineers, appeared in the Pine Wood, near Beyrout, ready to resist the foe. The foray of the pirates had been both brief and bootless, and failing in their hopes of making a dash into Beyrout, they gladly effected a speedy retreat, and stood out again to sea. The gallant conduct of the Christians, which alone saved the town, for the Mohammedans were paralysed and stupified into helpless inactivity, by the wild and sudden yells, and the rattling discharges of musketry which disturbed their slumbers on the dawn of that eventful day—instead of meeting with the thanks and gratitude of their rulers, only entailed upon them, as rewards for their zeal and gallantry, fresh subjects of vexation and complaint.

It was declared to be utterly impossible that

such an attack would have been made by Christians on a Moslem town, without the secret connivance of their co-religionists within its walls. Abdallah Pasha, acting at once upon this unquestionable and highly sagacious "sequens," thought it much too rich an opportunity to be lost for making a little money; and expressing his determination to punish so daring a coalition, in such a manner, as to deter future traitors, fined the Christians £5000. His brother pirates would probably have been glad to compensate for half that sum!

The siege of Sanoor, a strong hold of the Metualis, formed a stirring episode in the Emir's life, in the year 1831. In vain had Abdallah Pasha, for years previously, endeavoured to raise a contribution suitable to his idea of state necessity, in the districts occupied by these sectarians.

The ancient spirit which had paved the way for the independence of Daher, and afforded pretext for the cruelty and rapacity of Djezzar, seemed again determined to brave all risks, rather than submit to the ruinous exactions which now threatened to consign them and their families to poverty and

death. In this emergency, the Emir Bechir was called upon to exhibit his wonted courage and perseverance, in bringing the contumacious subjects of the Pasha, to reason and obedience.

The summons afforded him an opportunity for show and display, of which he readily availed himself, and immediately sending orders to all the different Macaatagees to join his standard on the plains of Acre, he marched from thence at the head of an imposing Mountain force, up to the very gates of the strong fort in which the insurgents had taken refuge. For three months they held out with a courage and constancy which too clearly evinced the cruel nature of the alternative which they were seeking to avoid; but fatigue and thirst at last made fatal inroads on their strength and numbers, and after having nobly resisted several assaults, they were compelled to surrender at discretion.

Abdallah Pasha, on receiving the grateful intelligence of this success, declared that his cannon had gained the victory, and ordered them to be clothed in a most splendid suit of cloth, embroidered with gold! The Emir Bechir, disgusted

at such heartless and ungrateful frivolity, did not even condescend to go and salute him at Acre, but proceeded direct to Ebtedeen, where, after collecting around him all the Emirs and Sheiks of the Lebanon who had been present at the recent operations, in full divan, and thanking them for their exertions,—declaring that it was to their swords alone, and not to any merits of his own, that he owed his success,—dismissed them, with presents and gratuities, to their respective homes.

The supercilious behaviour of Abdallah Pasha towards a Prince, who by his age, experience, and long and able services, might have expected, and certainly merited, a more considerate and respectful treatment, would at all times have been ungracious and impolitic, but at the present moment was peculiarly unfortunate and misplaced. For scarcely had time been afforded to allow of the Emir forgetting such conduct, ere the long-contemplated interference on the part of the Egyptian Viceroy in the affairs of Syria, began to develope itself in a manner which left no doubt of the extent or inflexible determination of his views; and the Emir

found himself suddenly reminded of engagements, the fulfilment of which, the growing eccentricity of Abdallah Pasha's character, and recent circumstances in particular, made him no way anxious to evade.

Certain differences between Mehemet Ali and Abdallah Pasha, respecting some Egyptian refugees who had fled to Acre and been sheltered by the latter, having been exaggerated and inflamed into a cause of quarrel by the Viceroy,—who gladly seized this pretext, if, indeed, he had not secretly encouraged it, for commencing his long-harboured designs upon Syria,—the Egyptian army, under Ibrahim Pasha, received orders to proceed across the desert and lay siege to Acre. The summons to surrender, which Ibrahim sent to Abdallah Pasha on his arrival, was treated with sovereign contempt. For nine months Abdallah had successfully resisted the united efforts of seven Pashas; was he to be intimidated by the threats and preparations of one? The Egyptian General, therefore, finding that he was to be vigorously opposed by one who was already practised and experienced, in all the various means and appliances necessary for the defence of

a fortress, drew out his camp, commenced his lines of approach, and completed all the steps necessary for a regular investment.

As the real object of this expedition was the conquest of Syria, not merely the satisfactory termination of a quarrel and dispute, it became the duty of Ibrahim Pasha to take such collateral steps as should promote the accomplishment of this important design. Knowing full well that if once the Lebanon acknowledged the authority of the Viceroy, all Syria would be at his feet, his first step was to open a communication with the Emir Bechir. Abdallah Pasha had likewise written to the Emir, urging him to take such immediate measures as would tend to check and harass the proceedings of his besiegers. With well-feigned dissimulation, the Emir affected to be embarrassed as to the manner in which it became him to act under these extraordinary circumstances; and, pretending an unwillingness to take the grave responsibility of involving the Mountain Chiefs in any decided course of policy—without their full consent and concurrence, he summoned them all to a public meeting at Ebtedeen, for the purpose of taking

their opinions on the serious juncture of affairs which had arisen.

Feeling, probably, the difficulty of addressing his feudal colleagues at any length, without in some degree allowing his own private sentiments to be discovered, he shortly stated to them the actual circumstances in which they were now placed. A powerful army had entered their country, the Commander-in-chief of which had written to him to know, whether he could calculate on the countenance and support of the Mountaineers of the Lebanon, in such ulterior measures as might enable him to vindicate his just rights against Abdallah Pasha; and further, whether, in the event of necessity, they were ready and willing to submit to his sway and authority. The Emir declared that he could not venture to express an opinion upon so grave a subject; that, in fact, he had no opinion, but was determined to be entirely guided by the counsels and wishes of those present, and that it depended entirely upon their decision, whether the Lebanon was to assume a position of friendship or hostility towards Ibrahim Pasha.

It required no great acuteness on the part of the

assembled Chiefs to perceive, that such an act of deferential consideration towards themselves, emanating from one who had never been accustomed to consult any one amongst them in the most important acts of his life, could only be dictated by a sagacious desire of knowing whether he could calculate on their approval, in the execution of a preconceived determination. Their reply for the moment was unanimous, that they were ready to follow the Emir in whatever steps he chose to adopt, and would abide by the consequences of his decision, whatever they might be. The following morning, the Emir Bechir, accompanied by his two sons, and an imposing suite of 1000 horse, descended from the palace of Ebtedeen, for the purpose of paying his respects to Ibrahim Pasha, in his tent before Acre.

The Pasha, being warned of the Emir's approach, sent out two entire regiments of infantry and a regiment of cavalry to meet him, and supply him with a becoming escort, a few hours' distance from the camp. At this interview it was arranged, that measures should be taken by the Emir for the submission of such parts adjacent to the Lebanon,

as might show signs of resistance to the Viceroy's domination; and that even while Ibrahim was engaged in carrying on the operations of the siege, the Emir should, by a prompt and judicious disposition of the forces at his own disposal, proceed to the subjugation and occupation of all the most important points in the vicinity of his jurisdiction.

In consequence of this arrangement, the Emir Haleel, the Emir's son, accompanied by Sheik Yousuf Abdel Melek and Sheik Hosein Talhook, marched upon Tripoli, which was defended by Othman Pasha. The Mountaineers immediately adjacent to that town, having been taken somewhat by surprise by the suddenness of these movements, and unable to comprehend the motives or reasons of such warlike demonstrations against a constituted authority of the Sultan, at once displayed a hostile front, and engaged in some severe skirmishes with the Emir's advanced parties. The conduct of the Druse Sheiks, by whom he was accompanied, is said not to have displayed that vigour and animation which usually signalize Druse warfare; and the Emir complained, that the suspicious want of cordiality and enthusiasm

which was displayed in their co-operation, had contributed in no slight degree to the checks and reverses which he had experienced in those parts.

And, in fact, the conduct of many of the Druse Sheiks, now began to give unequivocal symptoms of their secret enmity to the Egyptian government. They foresaw, with their usual tact and discrimination, that a power like that of the Egyptian Viceroy, if once fairly established in the Lebanon, would unavoidably entail upon them a multiplicity of vexatious restrictions and harassing demands, from which they were at present comparatively free. Above all, the rumours of the rigours and inevitability of the Egyptian conscription, with which they were all perfectly familiar, and an extension of which into Syria they were shrewd enough already to anticipate, tended more than anything else to alienate them from their new masters; and ere the siege of Acre was concluded, several of the Jumblatts, the Amads, and Nekads, under pretence of duty and allegiance to the Sultan, had secretly set off to meet the Turkish army, which was now concentrating on the plains of the Orontes.

Although this feeling had not as yet exhibited itself amongst the Druses as a body, yet so marked and decisive was the defection becoming amongst the Sheiks, that the Emir felt it necessary to inform the Egyptian General of its existence and extent; and to request, if possible, his immediate presence in the Mountain. The arrival of the latter at Ebtedeen, to which place he immediately proceeded in person, at the head of 4000 men, at last announced to the Lebanon the decisive change which had come over its destinies. His demand for two Sheiks from each of the families of the principal Druse Macaatages, to be sent to him, as hostages for their good behaviour, was at once complied with.

The fall of Acre, which soon afterwards took place, and the embarkation of Abdallah Pasha and his harem for Alexandria, removed the last doubts which might have existed in the minds of the Syrians, as to the prowess or ultimate success of their invaders; and when Ibrahim Pasha at length marshalled his troops for an advance upon Damascus, the ancient capital of the Arabian Caliphs, he felt and acknowledged that, whatever might be the

incidents of his future career, his first steps on the path to victory and Eastern Empire had been secured to him, by the welcome and support which he had received, from the Prince and Mountaineers of Mount Lebanon.

THE END.

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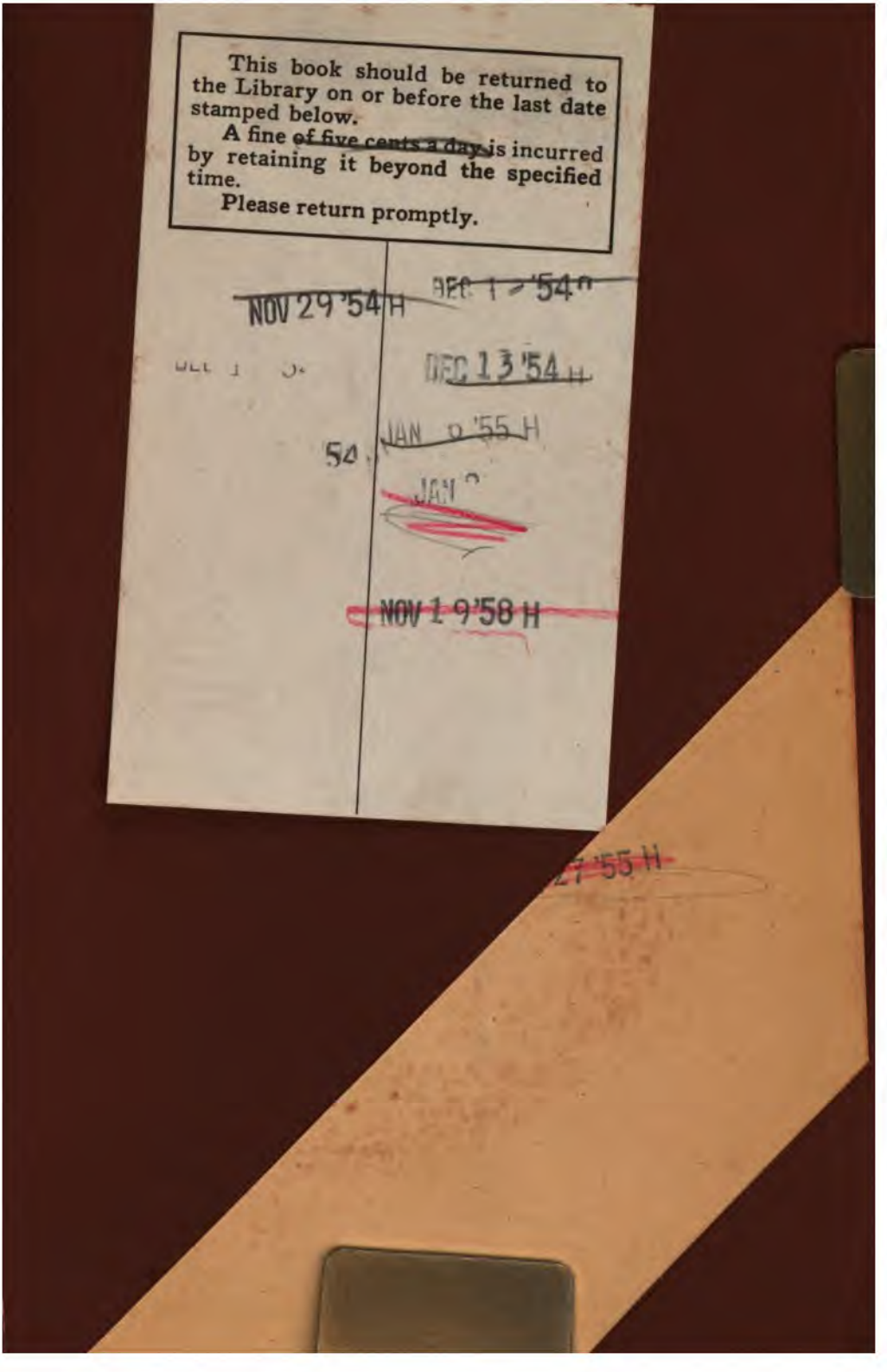
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